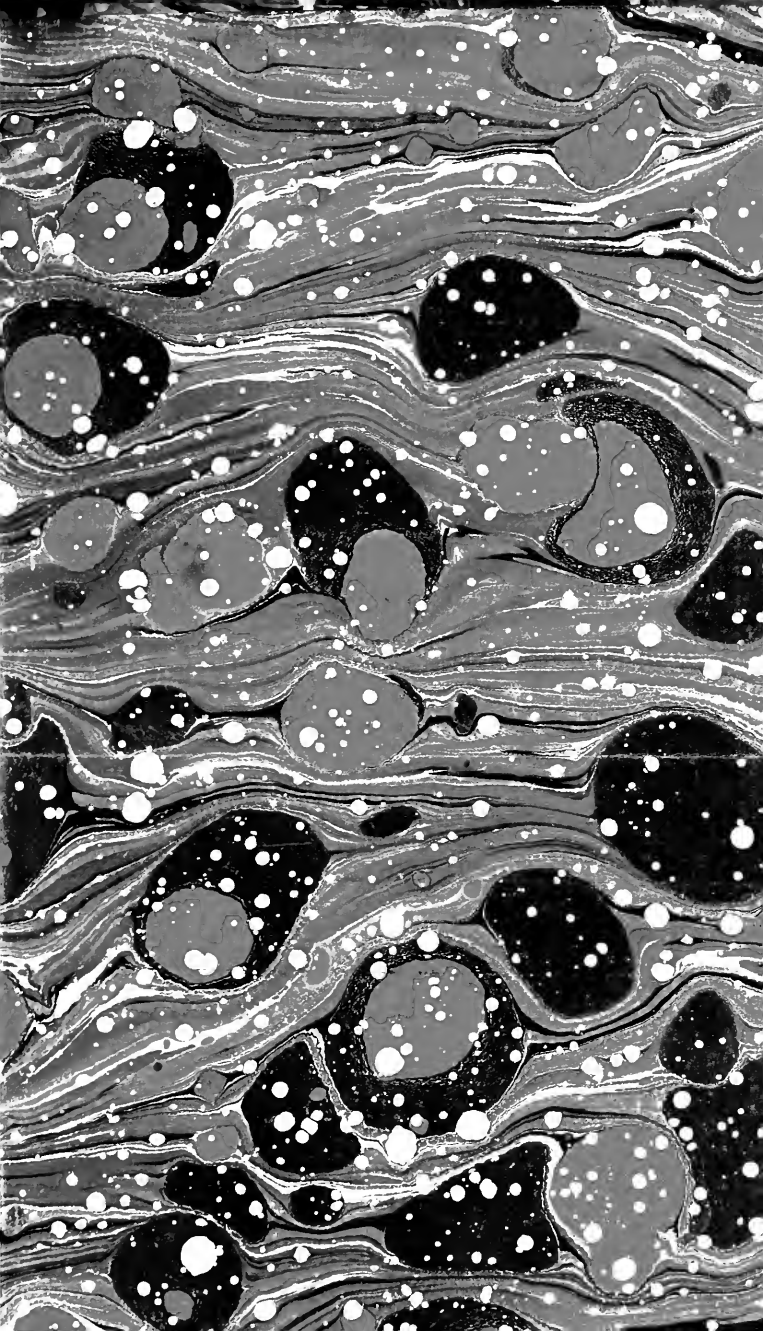




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THE
ALCOHOL
1900

ABROGLAD TO VINE
ZILBONA SOLITA
YRABLU

A Y E S H A,
THE MAID OF KARS.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "ZOHRAB," "HAJJI BABA," &c.

Il y a plaisir d'être dans un vaisseau battu de l'orage lorsqu'on est sûr
qu'il ne périra point.—*Pensees de Blaise Pascal.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
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DEDICATION

TO THE TRAVELLERS IN THE EAST.

IT has frequently occurred to me, who humbly presume to class myself among your number, that a tale of no common interest might be woven from the adventures of those who have ventured to explore the countries, in a portion of which the scene of the following narrative is laid.

It is with much diffidence that I offer the fruits of my labours to your notice, for I feel that you, who are best able to judge of their merits, are likewise most capable of detecting any failure. The presumption that there is any merit, I acknowledge to be great; but whatever may be your verdict, to your tri-

bunal I appeal, and by you I am desirous that sentence may be pronounced.

You have come from the East, and therefore I may be allowed to call you "Wise Men;" but although you are such, yet I conclude that, adopting an Eastern custom, you must occasionally have mounted on a house-top to take the evening air, and consequently have very probably seen an Ayesha on your neighbour's terrace. You have also, no doubt, been attended by your Mustafa and your Stasso, to warn you of your danger; and may yourselves have been placed in some awkward predicament, Giaours as you are, with the Turkish authorities.

I imagine also that you may have felt much of the enthusiasm and ardour with which I have endowed my hero, in the pursuit of the investigations which led him to adopt the imprudent conduct of which I have made him culpable; and should you have been involved in one of the hair-breadth scrapes which befell him, I

sincerely hope that the same *kismet*, or fate, which befriended him, was equally your portion.

You have, I dare say, heard of many such a character as Cara Bey. Let me refer you on that subject to Monsieur Amédée Jaubert's "*Voyages en Arménie et en Perse*," for certain adventures in a well, which he encountered during his sojourn with a Kûrdish chief; and should you be interested in the history of the Yezidies, or worshippers of Satan, I beg leave to refer you to the account given of them by the Père Maurice Garzoni, an Italian missionary, published by the Abbate Sestini, from whom I have extracted the short history of them which appears in the second volume.

When on the spot, I was assured that the stories characteristic of the Turks, related in chap. xi. vol. 3, were true. Of the truth of one which I have taken the liberty to insert so much in consonance with the ignorance of Turks in naval matters, I can fully vouch,

because I heard it from one of your own body, to whom I beg leave particularly to dedicate it.

To those who have visited Athens, from a page out of the history of one of whom I have taken the circumstance which forms part of the groundwork of my story, I venture to ask, whether probabilities have been sacrificed? I feel satisfied that such events as I have ventured to introduce might have occurred; and in a novel, we are told, what is not utterly impossible, may be liberally adopted.

Trusting to the neglect with which dedications and prefaces are commonly treated by the generality of readers, I would have disclosed more concerning the materials which I have adopted in the composition of my story; but fearful of saying a word which might forestall in the smallest tittle any of the interest which it may possess, I think it right to stop short, merely adding, that the events therein recorded, are supposed to have taken place some twenty years ago.

Thus abruptly taking my leave, and throwing myself upon your indulgence, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Your very obedient and devoted servant,

THE AUTHOR.

London, 20th May 1834.

AYESHA,

THE MAID OF KARS.

CHAPTER I.

But natheles while I have time and space,
Or that I forther in this talè pace,
Me thinketh it accordant to resòn,
To tellen you alle the condition
Of eche of hem, so as it seemed to me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degre.
CHAUCER.

IT was about an hour before sunrise, on a fine spring morning, that the great gates of the celebrated Armenian monastery of Etch Miazin, or the Three Churches, situated at the foot of Mount Ararat, on the confines of Persia and Turkey, were thrown open, preparatory to the departure of a company of

travellers, who had enjoyed the hospitality of its venerable patriarch for the preceding night. A waning moon still shed sufficient light to exhibit the sublime form of the mountain, with its snow-capped summit, its undefined protuberance of crags and rocks, its mysterious and shadowy declivities of landscape, to those who stood within the court-yard ; the arch of the gate forming, as it were, the frame of the picture. A covering of snow extended not only over all its great cone, but spread itself, although in lighter tints, even to the limits of the plain, subduing its inequalities, and apparently increasing, its dimensions. At this solemn and still hour, it reared its head into the skies like the apparition of some giant mountain, increasing in the mind of the beholder, the natural awe which would be inspired by the sacred character of its history, by the fabulous traditions attached to it, and by the lawless and dangerous character of its present possessors.

In a short time after the opening of the gates, the procession of the departing travel-

lers, marshalled according to Turkish etiquette, was seen to wind slowly through the portal, the noise of the rattling hoofs reverberating under the arch, whilst the words "*Oghour ola*—a prosperous road betide you!" and "*Allaha es marladek*—may Allah take you under his holy keeping!" were freely banded between those who were taking their leave and those who remained behind. The gates being again closed, the travellers could just distinguish, amidst the clatter of their horses' hoofs, the solemn chant of the good monks, who at this early hour were wont to break the stillness of the morning by their appointed orisons.

The *Surugi*, or guide, leading two baggage-horses, opened the procession; the *Tatar*, or Turkish courier, followed; whilst the master, the traveller in person, with his servant and such others as might choose to join the cavalcade, closed the line of march.

The master here was a young English nobleman, one of those spirited and enterprising youths whom it has occasionally been our

good fortune to know, who, although born to every luxury and every advantage which the highest civilization can bestow, have voluntarily submitted to severe privations, regardless of danger, amongst an ignorant, barbarous, and fanatic people, in order to unshackle their minds from those prejudices which may be acquired by only a partial view of mankind. The individual, in this instance, was the youthful Lord Osmond, the heir of a noble house. After an absence of several years, he was now on his return, anxiously expected by parents who doated upon him, of whom he was the pride and the consolation. Distinguished among the youths of the day by every sort of excellence, it is not surprising that they looked for his return with impatience and anxiety.

Lord Osmond was eminently distinguished in his person: he was of rather a delicate complexion, which was shaded by rich dark brown hair, growing crisp and short, round a beautifully modelled head; his nose was strongly arched; his eyes, which were situ-

ated deep in their sockets, were almost dark blue, and full of softness, as well as brilliancy; his mouth was at once the seat of seriousness and smiles, and, when not compressed, exhibited the whitest and most symmetrical teeth. He had a broad, open forehead, which at times would exhibit thoughtfulness, but always frankness and candour. In his person he was rather tall; his limbs were fitted with perfect symmetry to his body, and in his shoulders and general frame he displayed a more than common appearance of strength. His manners were rather more grave and imposing than is usual to men of his age; and, so far, they were adapted to the habits of Asiatics. He displayed great natural dignity in every word and action; at the same time, he was not deficient in a certain joyfulness and buoyancy of address, which went far in engaging the goodwill of those with whom he conversed.

He had quitted the university with honour; and great were the expectations raised of his future fame by his early conduct and ac-

quirements. But not satisfied with what he had merely read, he was determined to follow up, by actual investigation, such parts of his studies as had most engaged his attention, and he had chalked out for himself an extensive journey through those countries and nations which had created most interest in his mind. Consequently, with the consent of his parents, plentifully supplied with letters of introduction and of credit, he first made the tour of the southern countries of Europe, and in the course of time found himself an inmate in the palace of the English Embassy at Constantinople. Here he laid the plan of his Asiatic tour, but previously applied himself most assiduously to acquire the Turkish language, which he found would be of general use as long as he travelled in the Sultan's dominions, as well as in the northern parts of Persia.

During his stay with the Embassy, he formed a friendship with one of its *attachés*, Edward Wortley by name, a youth of great worth and amiability, who promised to cor-

respond with him upon all occasions. He was the eldest son of Sir Edward Wortley, an old Yorkshire baronet, celebrated for his classical learning, and his enthusiasm for every thing that related to ancient Greece.

Lord Osmond having, in succession, visited Athens and most parts of the Morea, the Islands of the Archipelago, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, traversed the desert to Bagdad and Bussorah, whence crossing the Persian Gulf to Bushire, he turned his steps northward to Shiraz, Persepolis, and Ispahan. He visited the Shah's Court at Tehran, and was now on his return to England, by Constantinople. During this long journey, he had principally adopted the Turkish costume, which gave him an appearance so truly Eastern, that even Turks themselves were deceived, and, before he was known to be a Christian, generally received him as a true believer. In Persia, where a Turk meets with but a sorry reception, he did not adhere to this dress; but once again about entering Turkey, our narrative finds him clothed partly as a Tatar, his head cover-

ed with a snow-white muslin turban instead of the usual cap, and his girdle ornamented with a pair of brilliantly-mounted pistols, whilst a broad Mameluke sword swung by his side. A short pelisse trimmed with sable hung over his shoulder, and he looked so entirely like a Turk, which, we will say, with his great admiration of the picturesque appearance of that nation, he was ambitious of doing, that wherever he went, he received the attention and salutations due to a man of consequence. Great advantages attended this, at the same time that it was the cause of much inconvenience, and even of danger. The advantages were, that he was enabled to travel unmolested by observation and impertinent curiosity, and to make his remarks upon men and places with more security than if he had appeared in his own character. The inconveniences were, that he was open to all the exactions and vexations by which the natives are frequently visited by their despotic governors; and that he lost the protection of those governors, when once he abandoned the

dress and characteristics of his nation. Of this perhaps he was not sufficiently aware; for he had been bitten by the *turcomania* to such a degree, that he had determined to forsake all appearance of an Englishman, fearing in that character that he would be deprived of opportunities of investigating the peculiarities of the natives, and acquiring a more accurate knowledge of their manners.

Before he left Constantinople, he had discarded his European servants, who he found would thwart the object he had in view during his Asiatic travels; and had taken into his service a Greek, as his own valet, and a Turk, who was to serve him as his Tatar and purveyor on the road. The Greek was a native of the village of Sedikieu, near Smyrna, who, in appearance, might have passed for one of the ancient heroes of his race. He was tall and erect, of the finest proportions, of great strength and agility, and dexterous in all manly exercises. His face was peculiarly handsome, his nose aquiline, his eyes full of intelligence, and, when fully dressed and armed,

he was a most imposing personage. His name was Anastassio, which had been abbreviated into *Stasso*; and so he was usually called. He possessed all the acuteness of his nation, was brave as a lion, and, although he had that veneration and awe for his Turkish superiors, which are inherent in the Asiatic Greeks, aping them in dress and manner upon all occasions, yet he never allowed such feelings to stand in the way of his duty towards his master, to whom he was devotedly attached.

To the Turk, if such he might be called, was attached a curious and interesting story. He was a native of one of the German provinces of Switzerland. When quite a lad, he had been taken prisoner by the Algerines, and sold as a slave to an Egyptian merchant, who had made a Mussulman of him, called him Mustafa, and, in the course of time, set him free. He became a *Tatar*, or courier, of whom several are always attached to Pashas and men of power, and, finding his way to Constantinople, entered the service of the English Embassy in that capacity, where, with

several others, he had performed the duties of his office with zeal and fidelity. He still talked his own language, and had sufficiently retained his European habits to form a strange mixture of Frank and Turk, both in language and appearance. He was short and fair: he willingly would have cherished a beard to increase his dignity, but nothing would coax the ungrateful hairs to appear. A scanty mustache graced his upper lip, which, however, was too sandy in its hue to stand out in proper relief upon his pale complexion; and although he had adopted the ponderous step, slow gesture, and phlegmatic bearing of an Osmanli, smoking the never-failing chibouk, and preluding every speech with the ever ready *Allah*, and *Inshallah*, and *Mashallah*, still, all would not do; the European leaven would appear, and render that caricature in him, which in a Turk is impressive and dignified. Although the good Mustafa was always working himself up to be a Turk, yet he generally fell short of his mark; as one may sometimes have seen a turnspit place him-

self on the same rank as a mastiff. And although he would willingly have made the world believe that he was a thorough Osmanli in courage and assurance, yet it was evident that nature had kneaded as much cowardice in his earthly dough, as was necessary to make his perceptions peculiarly keen upon the most distant approaches of danger. Lord Osmond had, upon his Asiatic journey, begged the loan of Mustafa from the Ambassador, having taken a great liking to him during the necessary excursions made to explore the wonders of Constantinople and the Bosphorus, in which Mustafa had accompanied him both as cicerone and protector; and as he promised to pay him well, and to return him to his post in safety, the request was easily granted. But we must return to our story.

During the early part of the morning, when the plain was overspread with a grey mist and the mountains were undefined in outline, our travellers paced onward in silence, each apparently absorbed in thought, or in the less intellectual operation of inhaling and emit-

ting smoke from their pipes. The Surugi pushed on with the indifference of one who has a specific portion of country to travel over, with which he is well acquaintd. Osmond had already turned his thoughts, as he had his horse's head, towards England, and was anticipating a joyful meeting with his parents and friends, discussing in his own mind what might be his future destiny, whilst he pondered over the many events which might have occurred during his absence. Stasso was endeavouring to recollect whether he had left anything behind him, among the venerable monks of Etch Miazin, which might be missed by his master at their next stage; and Mustafa was constantly looking about him, sometimes towards the verge of the horizon, sometimes in the direction of the dark mountain shades, and, again, behind every rock, apprehensive of some lurking danger, of some prowling robber, or some supernatural *ghol*. As the day began to dawn, two mysterious-looking objects appeared at a distance, in the direction of the road upon which they were travelling, which

first called forth all Mustafa's attention. They looked like horsemen. He had eyed them for some time without uttering a word ; at length in a low tone, and applying his shoveled stirrup to his horse's side, as he advanced some paces towards the Surugi, he said to him, "*Bana bak!*—Look at me ! What devilry is that coming this way ?"

"What do I know ?" said the guide ; "they may be stones, or trees, or men."

Mustafa, who suspected everything and everybody, when danger was in the wind, said, "What say you, man ! a stone is one thing, a tree is another, and a man is another ! I think it is more than one man."

"Perhaps yes, and perhaps no," said the unconcerned guide ; "*Bakalum*—we shall see."

By this time Osmond's attention was roused, and he exclaimed to Mustafa, "What are you pointing at ? What is the matter ?" He generally spoke to him in English, a language which Mustafa had acquired during his service in the Embassy, and which he talked

with an amusing admixture of Oriental idiom and German accent.

Mustafa willingly answered in English when Turks were not in company, but otherwise, nothing could cheat him out of any word or look that did not denote the true believer. On this occasion he answered Lord Osmond, saying, "This is a bad place: we are near Cara Bey's country, and we must look well with our eyes; don't you see those things yonder?" pointing to the objects under contemplation.

Osmond turned his head in the direction pointed out, and perceiving what he meant, said, "They are probably travellers like ourselves: suppose they be men, what then?"

Mustafa replied, "Ah! you don't know; this country is not an English country! Here are Kúrds, Yezidies, Armenians, Lesgies, all big rogues together. The Sultan of Turkey, and the Shah of Persia, are both of them as one bit of dung in their eyes; and when they cut throats, they say '*Bismillah!*—In the

name of the Prophet !' as if they were slaying a lamb."

By this time, the first streaks of day began to shine in the East, and gradually brought into light the different objects which 'had hitherto remained concealed. Still the supposed horsemen continued to look as such, although they had not changed their position, when the sharp-eyed Greek all at once exclaimed, "*Ti diavolo !*—What the devil ! men do you call them ? why, they are trees ! Mustafa Aga, you ! what say you ?"

Upon this discovery, Mustafa's face cleared up, his apprehension for the present subsided, and, in token of his satisfaction, he filled his pipe afresh ; and now, seeing his way before him, he flogged on the baggage-horses with all the authority of his office, leaving at the same time a long train of newly-emitted smoke behind him.

The whole party passed the harmless trees, two stunted willows growing near an ancient watercourse, at a trot, the Surugi breaking the clear atmosphere with a song, which sounded

more like the howl of a jackal than anything like melody ; whilst Mustafa exclaimed, as he held the tip of his mustache between his finger and thumb, “ That this should have grown thus long, and that I should not have distinguished between a man and a tree !”

“ Who is the Cara Bey whom you mentioned just now ?” said Osmond to Mustafa ; “ I have heard of him before, but I did not know that we were near his territory.”

Upon this question, Mustafa turned his horse’s head round, and joined his master, riding by his side, stirrup to stirrup : for such sort of apparent familiarity between master and man is common in the East, although be it known, a real Turkish Tatar never allows himself to be any man’s menial. Mustafa, I say, fearful lest the Surugi should hear any allusion made to Cara Bey, although he spoke in English, lowered his voice, and said, apparently in a shudder,

“ Cara Bey ! *Aman ! aman !*—pity ! pity !” at the same time taking hold of the lappel of his jacket, and shaking it as if he would throw

off an impurity : “ Cara Bey ! *ooof* ! he is a *Sheitan*, he is Satan, he is a black Yezidi, a worshipper of the devil ! he is without commiseration, without law ; cares neither for Sultan nor Shah ; if he catches you, he leaves you clean naked,” at the same time showing the palm of his hand, “ that is, if he does not murder you first. He is a thief ; his father was a thief ; his grandfather was a thief ; all his children will be thieves, and all his grandchildren the same ! What more can I say ?”

“ Where does this fellow dwell ?” said Osmond, smiling at the hereditary honours, up and down, which Mustafa had conferred upon the devoted Cara Bey : “ shall we travel any way through his country ?”

“ He lives,” said Mustafa, “ in a castle,” as he pointed his hand in a northerly slant, “ close to the Russian border, in a castle which is like my cap.”

The simile was excellent, inasmuch as he intended to say that the castle was situated on an almost perpendicular cone ; because a Tatar’s cap, which is a cylinder emanating

from the head, terminates at the top by a round yellow knob, which may well stand for a castle, and which did so in Mustafa's mind when he made the simile.

"Nobody has ever taken the castle, nobody can take it," continued Mustafa. "The Turk has tried—the Kizzilbash has tried—the Moscow has tried—all have come to nothing—all *bosh!* There he sits, like the black eagle, on his rock, looking for prey."

"And what have we to fear from him?" said Osmond; "he lives far from our road; and I suppose that the Turkish government keep a look-out upon him?"

"Fear!" said Mustafa, shrugging up his shoulders, apparently in contempt; "fear! there is no fear; but one must cross the Savanlû mountain always with the beard upon the shoulder, because it is there he sends his thieves, and he is often with them himself;—there he robs caravans, there he kills, there he impales. Mustafa continued his list of Cara Bey's different modes of disposing of his victims, until his mustaches dropped two per-

pendiculars on each side of his mouth through apprehension, and his face turned into a most suspicious paleness.

“ But, as I said before, the Turkish government, I suppose, keep a guard on the road to clear the mountain passes ?” said Osmond.

“ *Ey vah!*” exclaimed the Tatar, in a lengthened squeak ; “ Turkish government indeed ! The Turks are all jackasses. Their mothers and fathers, from the beginning of the world to this day, have all been jackasses, and they will always be asses. Turkish government indeed ! What do ye say ! Cara Bey laughs, and does thus to the Turkish government.” Upon which, Mustafa struck his left hand on his right elbow, which is the most approved mode amongst the Turks of showing the greatest contempt from one man to another.

Osmond was highly amused by his companion’s description ; and the more he heard, the more his desire was excited to become acquainted with this celebrated robber chieftain, particularly as it had often been his

wish to gain an insight into the modes of life, the religious rites, the frame of community of those extraordinary and mysterious people the Yezidies, of which he had heard so many contradictory accounts.

“What do you know of the Yezidies?” said he to Mustafa; “is it true they worship the devil?”

“This people,” said Mustafa, “are a tribe of Kurds; they live mostly in the Kurdish mountains; they dress like them, and speak their language. It is known that if you say ‘*Lahnet be sheitan!*—Curse on the devil!’ to a Yezidi, he will jump and kill you if he can. They do not pray to Allah; but their only desire is to make friends with the devil, and they will fight for him sword in hand. They never mention the word *sheitan*, or any word approaching to it in sound. Instead of using the word *shat*, which means a river in their language, they call it ‘a great water.’ Instead of the word *nal*, which is ‘curse’ in their language, and which also means a ‘horse-shoe,’ they say ‘sole of the foot;’ and they call a *nalbend*,—

‘farrier,’ ‘a soler of shoes.’ That’s what I have picked up on the road, when carrying despatches between Constantinople and Persia. But if the Turks hate one people more than another, it is these fellows.”

During this explanation, Stasso had lent an attentive ear to such words as he could distinguish, and finding that his master was making inquiries about the Yezidies, with the characteristic officiousness of a Greek he said to him, “I once tried a trick upon a man who I was told was a Yezidi, and that was by drawing a circle round him, and saying ‘*Lahnet be sheitan!*’ As I kiss your eyes, you ought to have seen his rage. He would not cross the line of the circle for the world, but his eyes flashed fire, he plucked his hair, and he would have torn me to pieces, had he got at me. This I know,” said Stasso; “what else can I say?”

“And have they no religious observances, no festivals?” said Osmond.

“Allah send them misfortunes!” cried Mustafa, at the same time lowering his voice lest

the Surugi should hear him : “there is only one of which I have heard, but perhaps the story is false. On a certain day in the autumn, they meet from all parts of the Kurdistan, men and women together ; they pass the night first in eating and drinking in one room, and then all at once they put out the lights, and nothing more is spoken till the morning, when they all return whence they came,—may Allah speed curses on their road ! This I have heard,” said Mustafa ; “Heaven only knows whether it be true, because they are very secret, and allow no stranger to partake of either their evil or their good.”

Thus did our travellers beguile the tediousness of the long and dreary road, which winds through the bleak tract of country at the base of the chain of Ararat, until they reached the miserable village of Hajjibiramlû, which is situated upon the frontiers of Persia and Turkey. Here the party took up their quarters for the night. Stasso, after having spread the carpets, and prepared his master’s bed, performed the office of cook, serving him

up for his dinner a smoking hot pillau, accompanied by a pair of tough fowls; whilst Mustafa took himself to the post-house, to prepare the horses and secure a guide for the ensuing day's journey.

CHAPTER II.

S'il est possible de marquer aujourd'hui l'endroit où Adam et Eve ont pris naissance, c'est certainement le pays où nous sommes.—TOURNEFORT, *Lettre* XIX.

THE Arpachai is a rapid river flowing close to the village of Hajjibairamlú, which, after winding round the base of an abrupt rock, adds its waters to the Araxes, and ultimately, with the Cyrus, falls into the Caspian Sea. At all times of the year it is a difficult river to ford, (and there is no other mode of passage,) on account of its rapidity, and the large loose stones which line its bottom, and which afford no steady footing to the horses and mules of travellers. At this time it was particularly turbulent; for in the spring the snows begin

to melt in the mountains, and add considerably to the volume of water, as well as to the force by which it is impelled. Osmond was obliged to wait until the day had broke, before the Tatar and Surugi, and the people of the village, would venture on the passage. They had secured the aid of peasants to help them to keep the horses on their legs, and when all was ready they set off, with more than usual exclamatory prayers from Mustafa for a safe journey.

It was still dusk when the congregated party reached the bank of the torrent. Mustafa at that moment sidled up to his master, and with a most mysterious air and in a suppressed tone of voice said to him, indicating the new Surugi by the action of his hand, "That is one bad man! that is a devil! You must not leave yourself behind to-day; we must all travel close; that fellow is bad!"

"How do you know that, Mustafa?" said Osmond, with difficulty suppressing a smile.

"You have no such fellows in England," said Mustafa; "we know them: he is a Yezidi

—I see his black cap—I know him by his hair!—All I say is, do not leave yourself behind!”

Upon this hint, Osmond took a long survey of his new guide; and indeed, he was a very remarkable-looking person. There was something mysterious in his whole appearance, difficult to define. For an Asiatic, his countenance was rather prepossessing; but his looks displayed great caution: he was of fair complexion, though considerably tanned by the sun; his figure was slight, full of bustle and activity; he said but little, but was observant of everything that passed, and his ever active eye, though much shaded by the fringes and tassels of a Kurdish head-dress, was constantly peering at every man and every action. When about to pass the baggage-horses, he pointed out the fittest spot where to make the attempt, and although the water was running fearfully swift, and foaming with violence, he mounted his own horse, a sorry jade to look at, and plunged at once into the stream. With great activity and dexterity he urged on the

cattle in their dangerous enterprise, whilst the peasants on each side, stripped to their trowsers, upheld the loads. Osmond and his attendants had remained behind to witness the safe landing of the baggage on the opposite bank : the operation was going on prosperously, amidst the shouts, the blows, the efforts of the surrounding people, when all at once, as if through a trap-door, the Surugi, horse and all, disappeared. The poor beast had got into a deep hole, lost its footing, fell, and was carried away by the torrent ; destruction appeared inevitable : the unfortunate man was seen for a moment buffeted by the waves, and then carried away by the overwhelming surge. Upon observing this, Osmond, without losing a moment's time, turned his horse's head down the stream, clapped the stirrups to his sides, and galloped off with the rapidity of lightning. He could occasionally distinguish the struggling Surugi in his rapid descent. He remarked a turn in the river formed by a large rock and tree combined, near to which he felt sure the sinking man must pass ; he flew thither, dis-

mounted, and, just as the poor wretch, bruised and exhausted, was about to disappear, he threw himself forward, plunging almost wholly into the water, and with an arm and grasp of iron seized and drew him forcibly to the bank ; with another vigorous effort he landed him in safety upon dry ground. After having disgorged the water which he had swallowed, being in some measure restored to his senses, the guide discovered to whom he was indebted for life ; and whatever he might be, imp or man, it is true that no living creature could ever have shown himself more grateful than he did to his deliverer. He fell at his feet, kissed his hands, embraced his knees, in short, made more demonstrations of gratitude than ever could be desired from one of God's creatures to another.

Osmond begged that he might remain at home and that another guide might be appointed : but to this he peremptorily refused to accede. There was evidently something more than a common refusal in his manner : he insisted upon immediate departure, and urged that if haste were not made to cross the river now,

it might be impossible to do so later in the day. The whole party therefore determined to proceed in their present trim, the two wet men merely wringing the water from their soaked garments.

Having crossed the river in safety, they resumed their journey. They entered upon an abrupt ascent of the mountain, along which they wound their way for a considerable distance. During their progress Mustafa did not cease deploring the help which Osmond had afforded the drowning Surugi ; for he felt sure that he was nothing more nor less than one of Cara Bey's spies, of whom he was supposed to keep many in pay, in order to inform him where he might best lie in wait to surprise and rob a traveller worth the enterprise. Osmond endeavoured to make his Tatar understand the Christian doctrine of "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you," but in vain ; for Mustafa argued thus. "I know that man intends to take away my life ; why, then, shall I not take his when I can ?"—
"But," said his master, "we are taught ano-

ther rule, ‘Do not evil, that good may come!’ Am I to let a fellow-creature perish, because I suspect he is plotting my death? You will see, Mustafa, that some good will accrue to us from my mode of acting.”—“Allah best knows!” answered the unbelieving Tatar; “*kismet*—fate, after all, is what we must look to!”

Osmond never lost an opportunity of enlightening poor Mustafa’s mind when he was able; but the Turkish doctrine of predestination, which settles everything so easily to the Mahomedan’s satisfaction, had taken such possession of him, that he delivered himself over to it with the most unbounded trust, and did not care to have his mind unsettled by any other. “*Bakalum*—we shall see!” the last refuge of every Turk’s argument, was Mustafa’s exclamation as Lord Osmond stopped his horse to enjoy a view of the junction of the Arpachai and the Araxes, which takes place at the base of a high projecting summit which they had just reached. The Surugi was pushing on, when Mustafa repeated his morning’s

admonition to his master, not to leave himself behind ; adding, “ This is a bad place—this is full of bad men.”

They were now journeying over the highest part of Armenia, as the snow, which still lay on the ground, proved ; and this was one of the spots most celebrated for robberies, and particularly for the depredations of Cara Bey’s gang. Mustafa here began to look very full of apprehension ; he cast his eyes about him in all directions, every distant black spot appearing to him a man, every noise, as he thought, denoting some approaching attack. The Surugi, Hassan by name, whose face had relaxed into great humility, and who did not cease evincing his desire to show his gratitude, seeing Mustafa thus full of anxiety, exclaimed to him, “ *Korkma*—fear not ; *bir chey yok*—there is nothing.”

“ What do you mean by *korkma* ?” said Mustafa to him ; “ we are not children to fear. Praise be to Allah ! we are always ready ; whatever fate ordains, in the name of the Prophet we shall be found ready. Be the Bey*

* *Cara Bey*, in Turkish, means the ‘ Black Lord.’

who robs on this mountain black or white, we are always ready to meet him with a white face."

Hassan looked at Mustafa with a scowl which stopped his garrulity, as if he would have said, "You are beneath my notice;" but, turning towards Stasso, he made signs for him to come near him, and then said, "By your head! by the soul of your master! I who am Hassan, a poor cattle-driver, I am nothing; but, praise be to Allah! I can this day render your master a service. Do not allow that foolish Osmanli to interfere; but should the Beyzadeh* see horsemen approach, let him not be alarmed. By this poor head which he has saved! I swear that nothing shall harm him. Upon my head! I will take him to Kars. If Cara Bey were to appear in person, he would only say, '*Salam aleikum*—peace be unto you,' and allow us to proceed. Let him therefore show no resistance, let him not even take a pistol in hand, for, if he does, it may be the worse for him: if he re-

* So English travellers are usually called in Turkey, *Beyzadeh* meaning the son of a lord.

mains passive, I will answer with my life that he passes unmolested."

Stasso immediately made this report to his master, who, having paid due attention to it, called Mustafa to him, and asked his opinion upon what it would be best to do, for it was now plain that they would meet those whom Mustafa feared.

"Did not I say that there is some devilry in this?" said the Tatar, whilst his cheek became pale with apprehension. "Let us turn back. Oh! why did not you let him be drowned? If fate had only been left to itself, it would have saved us in drowning him."

Osmond now immediately made up his mind how to act. He plainly perceived that he was in a pass where individual courage could be of little avail, that some plan of attack had been concerted against him, and that his guide was a party concerned. He judged that it would be wiser to trust in Hassan's words, than to prepare for defence. And it was very fortunate for him and his party that he made this decision; for, very shortly after, turning an elbow

of the mountain, they came full upon two well-mounted horsemen in Kurdish dresses, men of the fiercest aspect, whom Hassan no sooner perceived than, leaving the baggage-horses to themselves, he urged on his horse directly towards them. Mustafa upon this began to look in great dismay ; Osmond put the boldest face upon it and pushed forward ; whilst Stasso, by a motion natural to him, thrust his hand by his side to seek the blunderbuss which always hung there in readiness. Osmond carefully observed what was taking place between the Surugi and the horsemen : they seemed impatient at being stopped, whilst he, by his gestures, was evidently relating some story full of interest and importance ; they then all at once turned their horses' heads in the direction whence they came, whilst Hassan resumed his place of guide to the party.

“ What has happened ? ” said Mustafa, placing himself square in his saddle, now that the danger appeared over : “ What did those dogs want ? ”

Hassan, little heeding what he said, rode up

to Osmond, and seizing the hem of his cloak kissed it, and then explained that the men to whom he had spoken were in fact two of Cara Bey's horsemen; that their chief was close at hand; and that they had returned to give him a full account of what they had heard, particularly of what had happened in the morning, on account of which he would forfeit his head if they were molested.

Osmond appeared to put the fullest trust in Hassan's words, but at the same time he thought they might as well take advantage of the present moment to push on in all Tatar diligence, lest Cara Bey's magnanimity and forbearance might not second Hassan's gratitude to the full extent which the poor man really intended; and thus they proceeded at a quick pace, whilst Mustafa, whose fears increased faster than they galloped, did not cease exerting his heavy-thonged whip to the utmost of his power. They passed through the Armenian village of Ekrek, where its unprotected inhabitants, like a flock of sparrows who espy a hawk at a distance, were awaiting with fear and

apprehension a visit from the awful black lord. These people anxiously inquired what news they had concerning him, and at the same time seemed astonished that they should have passed apparently so unmolested.

Mustafa did not cease looking behind him as they rode on, and, upon scaling the heights which rise above Ekrek, he perceived a body of horse descending towards that village from the opposite side, evidently the so much dreaded chieftain and his party. Urging on the Surugi and the baggage-horses to their utmost speed, he had reached the extreme summit of the mountain, and was beginning to descend it at a gallop, when, on casting his eyes behind him, to his dismay he perceived that Osmond had come to a full stop, had taken out his sketch-book, and was looking about him with the greatest unconcern, as if neither danger nor Cara Bey were at hand.

In fact the view over which his eye wandered was perhaps one of the sublimest in Asia in point of extent, and one of the most interesting in point of locality. It encom-

passed a region which might be called the scene of man's first appearance upon earth ; and brought to his mind that portion of Scriptural geography which has been traced by no less a geographer than Moses. Whilst his eyes wandered towards the magnificent and verdant Georgia, watered by the Gihon, the second river, and the Euphrates, the fourth,* he asked himself, Could this have been the chosen garden of Eden ? He saw the sublime Ararat towering before him in unrivalled grandeur ; whilst the misty plains of Erivan, and the three churches, vanished in the distance : he could distinguish the green and swelling pasturages of Aberan, the heights of Aligez (the rival of Ararat), and could trace the windings of the flowing Araxes and its junction with the Arpachai. What eye could behold such a scene and remain unmoved ! and, contemplated by Osmond, whose mind was awake to the most solemn impressions both by reflection and instruction, it caused the most lively and unmixed delight. But as the first impression began

* Gen. chap. ii. v. 13 and 14.

to fade, another succeeded : he recollected that over the region which was then spread at his feet like a map, had wandered the ten thousand Greeks on their return to their own country ; and he now learned the full value of that portion of his education which in his schoolboy days had stored his memory with the interesting narrative of Xenophon. He had begun to trace the principal features of the great view in his book, in order to carry away the impression, when his ears caught the voice of Mustafa, who was quickly exclaiming, half in entreaty, half in anger, “ Why do you leave yourself behind ? This is a bad country : Allah ! Allah ! are you mad ? Cara Bey is here, and you stop ! ”

Stasso had remained with his master, his blunderbuss on the cock, and with his eyes sharply turned in the direction whence the robbers would most likely approach, and, to speak truly, shaking in his saddle with impatience at this untimely fit of mental absorption and admiration which had seized his master.

Neither Mustafa’s exclamation nor Stasso’s

impatience could hasten Osmond's operation, or unrivet his eyes from the fascinating view ; but, in truth, there was no cause for apprehending an attack from Cara Bey, for that redoubted personage, satisfied with the report made by his spies, had settled himself for the day in the village of Ekrek, and thought of nothing but making merry at the expense of its wretched inhabitants. It was his custom to prowl about the country when he could do so with impunity, (for he was at enmity with all the surrounding authorities, Turks, Persians, and Russians,) and, attended by his dancers and buffoons, to pass whole days and nights in drunkenness and debauchery.

Osmond at length ceded to the impatience of his followers, and slowly began the descent from the heights on which they stood, his eyes still wandering over the immense expanse which was spread before him. Mustafa would again have put the whole party on the full gallop in spite of the dangerous inequalities of the road, but was prevented by his master's curiosity to ascertain more precisely

the names and position of the many places of interest which he knew existed on the surface of the landscape. The Tatar pointed out to him the city of Kars, the frontier fortress of Turkey, where they were to rest that night, and which was conspicuous even at this distance, owing to the darkness of its walls, and the towers of its castle overhanging the town. Hassan's eyes, however, were constantly turned in a more northerly direction, a circumstance which attracted Osmond's attention, who earnestly inquired at what he gazed. The guide at first, with a sort of mysterious look of ignorance, said "*Bir chey yok*—there is nothing," when Mustafa, approaching his master, said, "He is looking at his own house, the devil's house." "How?" said Osmond.—"There is Cara Bey's castle," said Mustafa, pointing with his hand to a distant spot in the direction of the chain of Aligez.

Upon this, Osmond called Hassan to him, and said, "I hear, my friend, that one can perceive Cara Bey's residence from this spot: is it so?"

“What do I know?” said the Surugi; “perhaps yes.”

“In what direction is it?” said Osmond.

“*Bak*—see,” said Hassan, with some little hesitation, holding his hand over his eyes; “do you see this hill with a rock on its summit?”

“I do,” said Osmond.

“Well,” said the other, “that’s not it: do you see the little rise beyond the river?”

“Yes,” answered Osmond.

“Well, that’s not it; but look a little farther, and you will see some ruins under the hill.”

“I see them,” said Osmond.

“Well, that’s not it; but carry your eyes immediately beyond over the crest of the high land, and you will discover a black spot,—that is it.”

“I see it not,” said Osmond, straining all his eyes at the same time.

“*Deh!*” exclaimed his guide, with a very lengthened accent on the word, finishing with a falsetto squeak, and throwing his hand forward as if he would reach it—“look as if you

were looking to the end of the world, and you will see it."

"I do ! I do !" exclaimed Osmond, at length.

"*Na to ne*—there, there it is !" cried out Stasso.

"*Allah bela versin*—may Heaven send it misfortunes !" mumbled Mustafa in an under-toned growl : "I see it but too well."

"So, that is Cara Bey's castle, is it ?" said Osmond. "Is it in the Shah's territories, or does it belong to the Sultan ?"

"What do I know ?" said Hassan ; "it is a castle—it is God's work."

"What name does it go by ?" said Osmond.

"What do I know ?" said Hassan ; "it is the *kasr*—the castle."

"As Allah is great," said Mustafa, "it is called *Tepeh dive*—the Devil's-hill."

Upon this, the Yezidi turned his horse's head down the declivity, throwing a fierce look at the true believer, and continued his road.

But Osmond turning his head a little to the left, inquired again, "Tell me, is that a town which I see yonder ? it appears to be a large place."

“That is a Giaour city in ruins,” said Mustafa; “it is called Anni; *bosh der*—it is nothing.”

“Anni!” exclaimed Osmond, with the greatest interest; “is that the famous Anni? we must see it. Cannot we go now?”

“Heaven forbid!” exclaimed Mustafa with horror. “What do you say? It is the headquarters of all the thieves and rogues in the country. A man’s head would not be worth a para who would venture to go there. I won’t go,” said he doggedly.

Osmond did not urge his wish at present, seeing that the sorry animals which they bestrode could scarcely carry them to the end of their stage; but he mentally promised himself not to leave this part of the country without visiting the remains of a city almost unknown to European travellers, and which in its prosperity is described as having been the seat of a people more civilized and prosperous than any of those which now occupy the soil.

They now pushed on for Kars. The day was beginning to draw to a close when they

reached the plain upon which that place is situated. Mustafa by this time had entirely forgotten his fears, and having again resumed the airs and dignity of the Tatar, placed himself well upon his perpendicular on the saddle, squared his elbows, and belaboured the rumps of the baggage-horses before him with as much zeal as if the devoted Cara Bey in person were there instead. The vigour of his whip was occasionally arrested by a scowling look which the mysterious Hassan threw behind him; but even that did not stay his hand, when he contemplated the comforts awaiting him at Kars, for he already enjoyed in imagination, the bath, the shave, the plentiful pillau, and the consequential strut into the coffee-house—all delights of the first importance to a Turk.

At length the Surugi set up the long howl announcing the arrival of travellers to the *Menzil khaneh*, or post-house. Osmond, tired and jaded with his long day's journey, joyfully greeted this sound as the harbinger of approaching rest; and Stasso began to twist his mustaches, to look at the pistols in his

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girdle, and to consider how he might best pass off as an Osmanli among the new people he was so shortly to visit.

The sun was about to set as the party crossed the bridge which is thrown over the Kars river, and its last rays lighted up the dark castellated walls of the city, which rose in sombre and picturesque forms before them. The wearied horses had scarcely strength enough left to scramble over the narrow and ill-paved streets, slipping at every step, and were only kept on their feet by the never-ceasing application of Mustafa's whip, and the shovel stirrups of their riders. The Surugi was directing his steps to the post-house, when Stasso, after communicating with his master, ordered Mustafa to conduct them to some good private house, where they might enjoy more cleanliness and comfort than are usually to be found at the Menzil khaneh. In consequence, he bade the unwilling Hassan proceed straight to a house which belonged to an Armenian of consideration in the city, a dyer, who he knew was always happy to receive a Frank

guest. After threading some of the bazaars and bezestens, they struck into a narrow street, bordered by houses of considerable height, as strong as castles, paved with such broad flagged stones that the horses could scarcely find a footing.

The Surugi with the baggage-horses, followed by Mustafa, had just turned the sharp angle of a street, previously to entering into the courtyard of the Armenian's house, when Osmond, followed close by Stasso, drew in his horse's rein almost instinctively at the apparition of two females standing at a doorway into which they were about to enter, but who had turned to steal a look at the passing strangers. One of them was rather tall and of a commanding figure. Her veil escaped from her hand as Osmond stopped to gaze, and exhibited to his eyes beauty of such astonishing perfection that at first he thought a being of superhuman excellence stood before him. There was a radiancy in the brilliant cast of her features, complexion, and countenance, that struck into his heart at once, whilst the most angelic and maidenlike

modesty beamed over her whole manner and appearance. He gazed with all his eyes ; his heart expanded into a feeling which hitherto he had never known ; and but for the impossibility of making his enjoyment permanent, his journey would have finished there. This lovely creature was accompanied by a black slave, whose good-humoured face seemed to testify all the pleasure she took in the arrival of strangers. A row of the whitest ivory teeth grinned through the coral of her lips, backed by the ebony of her face, and produced the strongest contrast to the dazzling whiteness and rising blushes of her youthful mistress. As they began to withdraw more into the house, Osmond put his horse again into motion, but, in so doing, the jaded beast made a false step, and attempting to retrieve it on the slippery stones, he fell, and threw his rider upon the angle of the very step which led into the house of the fair object of his admiration. This abrupt action produced a half shriek of fear and alarm from the maiden, who, instead of running off, as most Turkish maidens would

have done, rushed forward to his assistance. The tone of her voice, the most silvery and harmonious which ever issued from under a veil, completed the fascination into which he had been thrown, and as he slowly raised the fallen brute, he made a profound obeisance, indicating his feeling of admiration; an action so unusual to one of her own countrymen, that she, on her side, was sensibly impressed by it. She immediately retired when she saw him again seated on his horse; but not till then did he feel the intenseness of the pain caused by the bruise which he had received on his knee.

Having reached his resting-place, he with difficulty dismounted, and, with the help of Stasso and Mustafa, clambered up a flight of high steps which led to the room destined for his reception. And here he began to discover, for the first time, certain slight shiverings, and other indications of fever, which, but for the excitement of the day's journey, he might have felt before, and which were not long in making themselves manifest; showing that

it is seldom even the strongest and most healthy can travel a whole day with wet clothes on their back, without sooner or later feeling the dire effects of such imprudence.

CHAPTER III.

Non seulement Kars est une ville dangereuse pour les voleurs, mais les officiers Turcs y font ordinairement de grandes avanies aux étrangers, et en tirent tout ce qu'ils peuvent.—TOURNEFORT, *Lettre XVIII.*

LITTLE had Lord Osmond anticipated, after once having passed the Turkish and Persian frontier in the manner we have described, when every difficulty and danger was apparently cleared away between him and his own home, that his *kismet*—his destiny, as the Turks would immediately pronounce it, should lead him into adventures upon which were to hang his future lot in life, and stop him where he was least inclined to be detained, however ready he might be to meet and even to seek any event which

would give him an insight into the manners and polity of the people among whom he sojourned.

Such, however, was the case ; and we arrest the course of our narrative for a short time, in order to make our readers acquainted with the state of affairs at and about the place of his detention.

Kars, although its origin be of remote antiquity, is at the present day a place of comparatively little importance, and is principally remarkable for being the extreme frontier town belonging to Turkey on the north-east Persian border. It is built upon a rocky bank, exposed to the south-east. A castle upon a steep rock, in a picturesque and commanding position, overlooks it ; and its dark towers, which are now ruinous and running into decay, give it an appearance at a distance of more strength than it really possesses. The ground by which it is surrounded forms itself into a sort of amphitheatre, behind which runs a deep valley, precipitous on all sides, through which winds the river. A stone wall,

with square turrets at stated intervals, encompasses it on every side, and it is furnished with gates, which, according to Asiatic custom, are closed at sun-set and opened at sun-rise.

Its inhabitants are a race of bigoted Musulmans, intermixed with Armenians, and it enjoys the reputation of being a place of call for the many thieves and marauders, Kurds, Yezidies, and others, who at various times and seasons infest the highways, and who are and have been from time immemorial the dread of caravans and travellers. The exactions made upon passengers, and the petty despotism to which they are exposed from the authorities, render a visit to Kars disagreeable and even dangerous; the men in power, in proportion to their distance from the seat of government, feeling secure in their villany; whilst the unprotected sufferers feel, in the same proportion, how unavailing would be their resistance.

A pasha is the chief officer, and his appointment to this distant and dreary post is generally looked upon as a sort of honourable exile. He is nominated at the Porte, and is independent

in his jurisdiction, although he is enjoined to look up to the Pasha of Erzeroum as his superior, inasmuch as he is the appointed chief and protector of the frontier, as opposed to the Shah of Persia, the sultan's neighbour ; as well as to the Russian authority, which trenches close upon the limits of his pashalik.

At the time of Osmond's sojourn, the Pasha was a man of low origin and coarse habits : he had once been a *pehlivan*, or prize-wrestler, and was consequently called Pehlivan Pasha ; thereby recording his ignoble origin,—an act of humility from which no Turk ever shrinks, however exalted may be his subsequent rank. He was a man of immense personal strength, and his chief enjoyment consisted in witnessing the combats of pehlivans, by whom he was constantly surrounded, and with whom, as occasion offered, he would not refrain from trying a fall himself. He was not accused of wielding his power with undue severity as a governor, being good-natured, weak, and addicted to sensuality, for he willingly turned over the

affairs of legislation to the Mufti,* the civil and religious officer of authority; a crafty, bigoted, and unrelenting Mahomedan, who might be said to hold the principal sway in the city, and who, in proportion to his blind devotion to the laws of his Prophet, bore a corresponding hatred to all infidels. There was, besides, an Aga of the janissaries, and the usual Ayans, or elders, who were called upon to attend in council on questions connected with the well-being of the place and its inhabitants.

The neighbourhood of the Kurdistan was one of the principal causes of the want of safety on the road leading from Turkey into Persia. Its inhabitants, the Kurds, an ancient race, whose marauding practices are coeval with their origin, are not to be kept under control by either the Sultan or the Shah, and indeed are scarcely amenable to the rude government

* The chief man of the law in a Turkish city is generally called Mollah, but this personage chose to take upon himself the higher title of Mufti, which, in fact, only belongs to the great chief of the Turkish law, residing at Constantinople.

of their own chiefs, who, although nominally dependant upon the two great states, Turkey and Persia, according to the districts which they inhabit, are in fact each independent in their own town or fort, and can be styled little better than chiefs of banditti, although they take to themselves the titles of Pashas. Thus in the city of Bayajid there is a pasha, but he is a pasha only to pillage and destroy. At a more distant town, Topra Caleh, existed a beg, who was at open war both with Persian and Turk; but at the time in which our history exists, the most notorious offender was Cara Bey, of whom we have already given a hasty sketch, and as he will again be brought to the reader's notice during the course of our narrative, we will withhold any further digression, and return to our travellers.

Lord Osmond, on the very first night of his rest at the Armenian dyer's, found himself assailed by all the symptoms of fever. Mustafa, who had not failed to assert the Tatar and the true believer the moment he entered the walls of the infidel's dwelling, stepping

heavily at every tread of his iron-shod boots, throwing a curve of importance into his back and shoulders, and making frequent and indecorous allusions to the Armenian's father and mother in order to quicken his operations, had collected as many comforts for his master as the house afforded. All the softest cushions were brought from the women's apartments, mountains of quilts were piled upon the bed, and a brazier of red-hot charcoal with an apple in it, was placed in the centre of the floor.

Very soon after these preliminaries, a most plentiful dinner was served up, which, while it did credit to the goodwill and hospitality of the host, almost killed his guest, whose increasing disorder made him loathe the sight of food, and who, from being the most valiant to encounter the thousand ills which travelling in Asia is heir to, all at once sickened and sought his bed. He implored Mustafa to cease his persecutions of the Armenians, to diminish, if possible, the rigour of his authority, to sweep the lamb stuffed with plums and its accompany-

ing pillau from the room, and to leave him alone to his rest. When this was done, he called Stasso, and ordered him to deal kindly and liberally towards Hassan the guide, who, whatever might have been his original intention, had shown by his subsequent conduct an uncommon degree of gratitude for the service which had been rendered to him. He then had recourse to a small medicine-chest which always accompanied him, put a proper bandage about his wounded knee, and endeavoured to compose himself to sleep. But this was not so easy to effect, for the image of the beautiful apparition which had recently crossed his path, had so entirely taken possession of his thoughts, that it produced a third disorder, more dangerous to his repose than either his fever or his broken limb.

“What can she be? who is she? I have seen a face like her’s, she strongly puts me in mind of some one whom I have met before. But no, nothing was ever so beautiful and bewitching! She cannot belong to these Turkish barbarians; she ought to take place among the great

of the world ! There is a soul in her eye which is not to be mistaken." In these and such-like thoughts and exclamations did Osmond indulge as he arrested the vision of the beautiful maiden in his mind, and dwelt with unceasing perseverance over the scene which had taken place in the morning. But when he recollected where he was, in an obscure city of Turkey, among thieves and barbarians, he exclaimed, "What else can she be but a poor benighted Turkish girl, some child of ignorance and fanaticism, whose beauty may administer to the will and pleasure of some coarse barbarian, and his barbarous usages? Would that I had never seen her !" he repeated frequently, until he wound himself up into an uncontrollable desire again to behold her exquisite charms, to be acquainted with her history, and to acquire a knowledge of the circumstances which had thrown her away among a people apparently so little likely to appreciate her worth.

We will now leave the sick man, and turn to his attendants, who were in full enjoyment of the plentiful fare which he had rejected.

Mustafa had taken into his own hands the whole arrangement of the evening's entertainment. Among the Armenians he reigned without a rival. A true believer on his own soil, among Christians, may be compared to a game-cock in a farm-yard, or a mastiff in a kennel; he swells with arrogance, struts with importance, and exerts his powers of speech with insolence. Our Tatar, preparatory to his meal, had duly tucked up his sleeves, had called to Bogos (for such was the dyer's name) for water wherewith to wash, and squatting himself down over a pewter basin, which was held to him by the Armenian in person, water was poured over his hands, and he thus performed his ablutions with great satisfaction. Having refreshed his weather-beaten face by passing his wet hands over it, he coaxed his small mustaches into as good a spread as they would admit of: and then wiping his hands with the towel which he took from off his host's shoulder, he proceeded with an important step to seat himself heavily upon a cushion which had

been laid for him in the corner of a lower room, and there he awaited the coming meal.

Stasso, having disposed of his master for the night, followed on the same intent, and tucking his legs up seated himself near his companion, the action of his hands denoting his impatience to begin, the quick turn of his eye towards the avenues of the kitchen evincing whither his thoughts were directed, and a certain restlessness of his jaws showing that roast lamb and pillau were not unknown to them. He interceded for the company of Hassan the guide, to which Mustafa assented, rather as giving him an opportunity to exhibit the munificent master, than as showing him any good will. At length the *chorba*, soup, smoked upon the board; a dead silence ensued, and nothing but the noise of hot in-draughts, produced by the junction of spoons and mouths, was heard: then came *dolmas*, rice and meat-balls, wrapped up in vine-leaves; then *keftas*, force-meat; *halwah*, sweetmeat; and last, the lamb and the mountain of boiled rice. All disappeared

like magic through the medium of powerful fingers and capacious jaws, as one may oftentimes see sacks of coal thrown with precision from the cart into the orifice of the cellar below. So ate the three travellers; long were their labours and portentous was their digestion. But let us not omit the wine, the forbidden Armenian's wine, which Bogos ever and anon poured for his guests into a basin, in England called a slop-basin, but which in Turkey is looked upon as the only proper medium to drink with. Many were the cheerings of *agam*, my lord!—*guzum*, my eyes!—*janum*, my soul! with which Bogos enticed on the too willing Mustafa to empty bowl after bowl of his purple resinous wine, until the eyes of his guest, which never were large, almost totally disappeared under the gradual swelling of the cheeks and forehead.

Stasso, a more ruthless and hardy drinker, scarcely acknowledged the passage of wine as it flowed over his gullet; whilst the disciple of Satan, wary and on his guard, hardly admitted it to his lips. Never before had three

hungry travellers fulfilled a more agreeable duty than that of emptying the dishes of their host, and attending to their own repletion. Mustafa, like most other Turks who think it part of their religion to bully a Christian, had not ceased to lard the tenor of his speech to Bogos with certain allusions, all as a matter of course, although offensive, touching his relations and friends. At length, gradually softened by the wine, he glided into expressions such as these :

“ By Allah ! you are a good man you ! by your father, I love you ! Among swine, Armenians are the best. Bogos, my brother, you are a man ; Mashallah ! you are my father, my uncle. Ah ! ah ! give me sweet wine, and I want nothing more.” As fast as the skin fell in its circumference, so fast did Mustafa’s heart soften, until sleep gradually overtook him, and rolling himself in his cloak he fell like a trunk consumed by fire on the very spot where he had eaten, and remained immoveable for the night.

Stasso was not unmindful of his master’s orders, and, previously to the meal just de-

scribed, had been in close and confidential communication with Hassan; for experience had taught him in his travels never to lose an opportunity of making a friend, however unprofitable that friendship might at the moment appear. When he counted out to the guide, little expectant of such a gift, the sum of money which his master had ordered, Hassan's eyes sparkled with pleasure, and he could not find words sufficiently expressive of his gratitude. "If ever your Aga," said he, "should require aid during his stay here; if ever misfortunes should fall upon his head, let him send for his slave. Do not despise Hassan because he is a surugi; believe me, he knows more than you can suppose. No fox can creep out of its hole—no jackal can gnaw a carcass—no thief can lay a plan, without its being known to Hassan. Above all, trust not the people of Kars; they are bad, ill-begotten, extortioners, men without souls; keep clear of that *bash pezevenk*—that head procurer, the Mufti; he is a dog without a liver; he is without compassion

Your Aga saved my life! here is my neck," said he, at the same time bending down his head, "let him strike; we are not animals, we are men!" Many more were the protestations which Hassan made to evince his gratitude; and although there was no likelihood that his services could ever be of the least avail to Osmond, or that he would have an opportunity of showing the extent of his thankfulness, still there was that sincerity and hearty good-will in his manner, which made Stasso confident he was a man to adhere to his word; and he ever kept him in mind as one who might possibly be of use to him in some future journey.

On the following morning, Stasso crept quietly into his master's room, but, finding that there was no symptom of his stirring, he took himself below, where the Armenian and his family had long been on foot, in the hope of securing the never-failing cup of hot coffee and the chibouk, without which no Asiatic is ever put into tolerable humour to encounter the events of the day. The first object he

saw on entering the room was Mustafa, who had just risen from his heavy sleep, seated in an attitude of hopeless inactivity, in the very self-same clothes in which he had laid himself down, his eyes unopened, his mouth pregnant with yawns, and an apparent torpor in his whole person, which spoke emphatically of the woful evils attendant upon much wine and much roasted lamb. At length a low moan issued from the torpid man. "Bogos, you Armenian you ! bring coffee :"—and such a desire will be found at the bottom of every Turk's throat, be he in the last throes of despair, or in the height of the greatest joy. The exhilarating drug was soon brought, when Mustafa opened first one eye, and then the other, and straightway began to fill his pipe. With such preliminaries the day's labours commenced ; and soon after, he was wide awake. He then began to discuss with Stasso and the dyer, what was necessary to be done in their lord's sick state. Bogos immediately advised that they should call in an old Armenian woman, who

was famous for curing all sorts of disorders, and particularly expert in reducing wounds and relieving bruised limbs. "What do you say, pig?" said Mustafa; "what filth are you eating? These Ingliz, Mashallah! praise be to the Prophet! are as stubborn as camels; and they would as soon take an Armenian's physic as they would eat a horse. They are men who carry all the world in the corner of their eye. After that, can you venture to bring an Armenian cow of Kars before an Englishman?"

"But, my pasha, my aga," said the unobtruding Bogos, with all humility, "I suppose an Englishman's leg is like an Armenian's? and I know the old woman has cured many a leg in Kars. Did not she cure Suleiman Aga's broken shin, he who is your next-door neighbour, after every other effort had failed? Talismans had been placed upon it, he was turned towards Mecca, still all would not do, until the old Caterina, with her herbs and her fomentations, put him on his legs again. After all, that is something."

“What are you chattering there with your Caterinas and your Paterinas?” said Mustafa, swelling with importance and evolving smoke. “Allah! Allah! I should like to see my Beyzadeh’s leg in the hands of your Caterina. Eh, Stasso!” addressing himself to the Greek, “what do you say?”

“What can I say, Mustafa Aga,” answered Stasso; “our Aga knows best what is to be done; we must leave it to him to decide; I will go and see.”

Upon this he returned to his master’s room, who by this time had awoke from a restless sleep, which only towards the morning had closed his eyes. Upon seeing Stasso, he exclaimed, “My leg is extremely painful. Is there anything like a surgeon in this place? I shall be detained here for ever, if something be not done; to travel in this state is out of the question.”

“What do I know, *Effendimou*—oh my master?” said his affectionate valet. “I have heard of an old woman who cures bruises and wounds; what else can I propose? she is an

Armenian, and a she ass." Then drawing a deep sigh, he exclaimed, "Where is this miserable and destitute place? and where the comforts and surgeons known to Franks?"

"But perhaps she is better than nothing," said Osmond, writhing with pain, and restless with fever. "Can I have broken a bone?"

"God preserve you from it!" exclaimed Stasso; "that *Arabisa*—that negress must have had an evil eye, when she turned round to look at us—may the *diavolo* take her!—and made your post-horse fall to the ground! May anathemas fall upon her eyes!"

"Don't say so, Stasso," said Osmond, "for if the negress had an evil eye, her companion had an eye that could not fail to bring good luck: tell me, did you ever see such beauty before?"

"As I cherish my faith," said the animated Greek, his eye brightening up into a flame, "I never did before, nor ever shall again. Such beauty!—Oh these Turks!—may their faces be broken up!—animals as they are, yet it must be owned they possess women who have no equals. Did you see, oh Effendimou, did you

remark her eyes, her hair, her complexion? These women have a pureness of blood in their veins which is not to be found elsewhere."

"But what can she be, Stasso?" said Osmond, warmed with the subject, and thus forgetting his pain. "Have you heard?"

"She is a *Turkisa*—a Turkish girl, that is certain. What else can she be? Her dress was Turkish, the house she entered was a Turk's—that was evident by the painting of it; and none but a Turkish woman can possess a black slave."

"You must find out who she is, Stasso," said Osmond; "I should like amazingly to see her again."

"May heaven prevent you!" exclaimed his servant; "these devils of Turks without entrails, cut off a Christian's head without compunction, and then place it between his legs, if they find him even speaking to one of their women. May the *diavolo* take them!"

"But there can be no harm in inquiring who and what she is," persisted Lord Osmond; "I am curious to know."

“ There is no harm in asking,” said Stasso, “ that’s true. She is probably a neighbour, and it is easy to know from the people of this house who she is ; but as for seeing or speaking to her, may God preserve us !” added he, whilst he made a sign of the cross.

“ But about this old woman,” said Osmond ; “ inquire where she lives ; perhaps she may afford me some relief. Go, Stasso, inquire ; and moreover, do not forget the Turkisa.”

Stasso left the room to perform his master’s bidding, at the same time that Mustafa entered. The Tatar had lost no time in going to a barber, who had so trimmed up his head and face that he looked like a new man, and having readjusted his whole dress, inserting his pistols and yatagan in their prescribed places, he stalked on with all the pride and superiority of a true believer.

“ Mustafa, sit down,” said Osmond, as soon as he saw his Tatar, to whom he did not fail to pay all the attentions due to one of his station, although he discoursed with him as if he were an European, as he in truth was.

“ This sickness and bruise of mine,” continued he, “ is a grievance ; but as you Turks say, my *kismet*—my fate must be borne with patience. I fear we must stay where we are at present.”

“ *Bakalum* — we will see !” said Mustafa ; never sorry at any delay in a town, where he would be left at liberty to smoke in a coffee-house, and enjoy the luxury of a good shave, and also of a hot-bath. “ I must go to the Pasha.”

“ True,” said Osmond ; “ make him my respects ; tell him I am sick and dying, and then I shall possibly be free from the torment of his *chaoushes* and *chokhadars* (officers) begging for *backshish*, or presents.”

“ *Bakalum* — we will see !” said Mustafa again ; “ backshishes are nothing ; leave the rogues to me. Be you well, and all will be well.”

“ Inshallah !” said Osmond, “ I shall soon get the better of my fever, but this leg of mine, I feel, will keep me here some time. I cannot stir, Mustafa !”

“ It will be nothing,” said the Tatar ; “ God is great ! One of our Tatars once broke his leg as he was leaving Arzeroum ; he tied it up, put it into a basket, rode night and day until he got to Constantinople, where the bone was set, and he is as well now as ever he was. Legs break and are mended—such is the world !”

“ That is true,” said Osmond, smiling at his Tatar’s philosophy ; “ but I want something more than a basket. I am told that there is an old woman here, who understands bruises.”

“ What do I know ?” said Mustafa. “ An old woman is often a greater evil than a broken leg : however, you know best ; if you do not mind her, I have no objection ; but only take care whenever she goes out of the room to burn a bit of paper and blow over each shoulder.”

“ And wherefore ?” said Osmond.

“ You will thus destroy the effects of her evil eye,” answered the Tatar. “ Many is the time that I have lost my way, and got into all sorts of mischief, after meeting an old woman. *Aman ! Aman !—pity ! pity !*” said he, shaking

the lapel of his jacket ; “ preserve me from an old woman ! ”

Upon this he left his master, and lighting a fresh pipe, proceeded to the residence of the Pasha, swinging his long robes, and strutting through the streets, with an air of dignity rarely seen among the rustics of Kars.

CHAPTER IV.

All suddenly abash'd she changed her hue,
 And with stern horror backward 'gan to start ;
 But when she better him beheld, she grew
 Full of soft passion and unwonted smart ;
 The point of pity pierced through her tender heart.
SPENSER'S *Faery Queen*.

OSMOND had not waited long after the departure of Mustafa before Stasso appeared, accompanied by Bogos the dyer, introducing Caterina, the old Armenian woman, whose curved back and withered hands denoted an advanced age. She religiously retained her veil, particularly that part of it peculiar to Armenian women, the nose-band, which goes tightly over the middle of the face, and keeps their noses flat. She approached her patient with a certain degree of awe ; for during her long career she

had never before been so near to a Frank, and that Frank an Ingliz, about whom she and her countrywomen had very vague and undefined notions. He might have "a fish's head and a serpent's tongue," for aught she knew, or he might, as his daily avocation, manufacture penknives, or broad-cloth and chintz, as silk-worms spin silk. But when Osmond addressed her in very good Turkish, all her imaginations fled, and turning up her withered eye, with which she took a good survey of him, she exclaimed to Bogos, making a sign of the cross, "Mashallah ! he talks Turkish as well as either you or I ;" and having said this, she was restored to full confidence in herself, and forthwith broke into an unceasing flow of words. "We are poor folks," said she, "but we have not lived to eighty years and upwards without having handled many a bruised leg, ay and broken heads too."

"So you are an Ingliz, are you?" she continued, looking at Osmond: "well well ! God is great ! that I should have lived to dress an English leg !" She then examined the limb,

which was indeed frightfully swollen, and soon began her operations, by fomentations and an application made of cooling herbs and sour milk. "Ah," said she, "I attended your neighbour, Suleiman Aga, for a good month ere his shattered leg began to give way to my skill, and when it did heal, everybody cried, *Aferin, Caterina!*—Well done, Caterina!"

"And who is our neighbour?" said Osmond, thinking it possible that he might receive some information concerning the beautiful maiden, whose image did not for a moment leave his thoughts.

"He is one of the principal Ayans, or elders of this city," said Bogos.

"He is a wonderful man," said the old woman.

"How do you mean wonderful?" inquired Osmond.

"He is a strict and severe Mussulman," said Bogos, explaining the meaning of his countrywoman: "he treats us Christians like dogs; we drink wine with fear and trembling in his neighbourhood."

“Akh !” exclaimed Caterina, “were it not for his daughter, we Armenians should have to contend with more difficulties than we do ; but she keeps his heart soft.”

“What sort of a person is his daughter ?” inquired Osmond, with great animation.

“Ey vah !” exclaimed the old woman, turning up her eye and looking into her patient’s face whilst she fumbled over the knee before her, “where have you been living all this while, O my soul ! that you have never heard of Suleiman Aga’s daughter ? I myself, I was once something, when I was young, but, as I kiss the cross ! she is a creature that has never been heard of out of Paradise. Pity, thousand pities that she belongs to the Turk ! Mashallah ! she ought to have belonged to Franks—to Christians. Akh ! she is as white as you, a great deal taller than I am, and as for teeth, and hair, and eyes, I had mine once, but, bah ! she has enough of them for the whole town of Kars ! What do I say ? the whole world might come to her for beauty, and she would still have enough left to remain without an equal.”

This was a subject upon which Caterina would have talked for ever, and one indeed of which Osmond was not soon tired, but he knew the dangers and difficulties attendant upon any communication with Mahomedan women. Although he felt that to see and speak to her was hopeless, still he could not help weaving in his mind a thread of romance, which led him on to conceive that he might in time be blessed with the possession of this gem of human perfection, improve its lustre, efface any flaws which it might contain, and polish it so effectually that he might produce it as something unequalled in the estimation of his own countrymen. Accordingly he stopped the old woman in her panegyric, but could not refrain inquiring more particulars concerning the maiden's former life.

"Has she a mother? What is her name? Is she about to be married?" asked Osmond, all in a breath.

"O my soul!" exclaimed Caterina, "how you go on. I am old, and cannot answer so many questions at once. You asked, has she a

mother? Well may you ask; she has indeed a mother, and we call her a misfortune. How such a daughter sprang from such a mother is not my business to ask, I am silent. She once made the sign of the cross, that's certain, but now she is a *kadún*—a *khanúm*, a head of a harem, although she preserves her Greek name, Zabetta, Zabetta Khanum. But the daughter, dear little heart! she is called Ayesha; she has a Turkish name, but the soul of a Christian: to do good is her whole delight; to do evil is her mother's only thought. Out upon the she imp! But life is full of good and evil. If you want them both in perfection, go to the next door."

"And is she engaged?" inquired Osmond.

"Engaged!" exclaimed the old woman: "and who is to marry her, in this land of thieves and rogues? there is not a man here fit to hold her slippers. She is only fit for the Sultan's seraglio. Her father cherishes her as he does his own soul: he has taught her everything, and there is not a scribe throughout the whole of Kars who could stand before her. She is

famous here, my Aga !—where have you been living that you have not heard of Ayesha, the daughter of Suleiman ?”

In this manner did the old Caterina entertain her patient, as he lay on his bed, whilst she performed her operations on his knee. He allowed her to attend him daily, and to exert her ingenuity in the composition of remedies, which, although they did not much hasten his recovery, did not retard it, whilst he was amused with her conversation, and interested by making her descant on that never-ending subject the perfections of Ayesha. His fever had yielded to his own remedies ; and but for the contusion, which required the greatest quiet, he might again have resumed his journey. Mustafa began to show symptoms of impatience, for he found the remote town of Kars but a poor theatre for the exhibition of his airs of importance, and, as the season began now to be favourable for travelling, he longed once more to be on the saddle.

Weeks had elapsed, and Osmond was still confined to his room, when, tired with breath-

ing the same atmosphere, and feeling that the open air would perhaps do him more good than all Caterina's remedies, he inquired if there was no terrace to the dyer's house, whither he might be conveyed, that he might enjoy a few hours of the breath of heaven. Stasso, having proceeded to take a survey of the premises, soon returned to say that nothing could be more easy, that the steps were wide, the terrace sheltered, and that it was in fact used as a frequent resort of the family.

With some difficulty, with the help of Bogos and Mustafa, the faithful Stasso succeeded in conveying his master to the terrace, where, having spread a carpet, a mattress, and cushions, he deposited him, without any more inconvenience than a groan or two, and a few wry faces. No sooner was Osmond restored to the open air, to the sight of the distant mountains, and all the various beauties of nature, than he seemed to be a new man, and his spirits rose with the change.

Caterina, who found that by her applications of herbs and sour milk she had not made

the progress she expected in his cure, had at length given birth to a profound thought: no less than to sew up his leg in a sheep's skin, the woolly side innermost. Often had she observed this remedy applied to horses and asses, and the bright question, "Why should it not succeed with man too?" flashed across her, as she saw a sheep led to the slaughterhouse; and straightway she determined to propose the scheme to her patient. When she reached his room at the usual hour of visiting him, to her surprise she found him gone, but she was soon informed of his pilgrimage to the terrace, and thither she followed, dragging with her as much of a sheep-skin as would be necessary for her purpose.

As soon as she made her appearance, Osmond greeted her with his usual good-nature, whilst Mustafa, who had long thought her labour was in vain, and who looked upon her as one of the causes of their detention, could scarcely refrain from indulging in the invectives which Mahomedans so often use towards Christians.

“What are you about, old mother?” said the Tatar; “what filth are you bringing here? I said your eye foreboded no good, from the first time I saw you.”

“*Eh, guzum!*—Eh, my eyes!” said she in answer, “what can I do? I bring relief to the Aga: this is for his leg,” showing her bit of sheepskin.

“Do you take the Beyzadeh for a horse that you treat him as one? Allah! Allah! are you mad? Evil was the day when we came to Kars!”

“Do not frighten the old woman,” said Osmond to the Tatar; “she is at liberty to do with my leg whatever she pleases.” Then turning to Caterina, he continued, “Say, what is to be done now? Am I to eat your sheepskin?”

Upon this question the old empiric broke out into an involuntary fit of laughter, which rang through the range of terraces on the adjoining houses, and which, to the astonishment of those present, was echoed by a corresponding peal at a short distance, pro-

ceeding, however, from a youthful and merry voice, and denoting thoughtlessness and high spirits.

“That is the voice of the little negress Nourzadeh,” exclaimed Caterina, as she turned her ear towards the sound; “what does she laugh at?” Upon which she looked over the adjoining wall, and, having caught sight of her, she cried out at the top of her cracked voice, “*Gel! gel! aî gidi mascara!* — Come, come! oh you young scaramouch!”

The terraces of the respective houses were separated by a low parapet, part of which was so entirely broken down that scarcely any division was preserved, and thus the houses of Suleiman Aga and the Armenian, who were next-door neighbours, were under almost one and the same roof. An abrupt wall, behind which rose an arch, skreened the entrance of the Turk’s house to the roof from those who stood on the Armenian’s terrace; and thus, when Nourzadeh ran to Caterina’s call, no one could see who stood behind the wall.

When the young negress, with her merry

face and broad-grinning teeth, appeared before the assembled group, she stopped short, and would have run back, had not the old woman said, "Where is your mistress?"

The girl, without saying a word, pointed archly towards the wall. Caterina, who after the panegyric, the never-ending praises, she had so frequently bestowed upon the daughter of Suleiman Aga, had longed above everything to bring to the eyes of her patient this flower of her city, in order that he might be satisfied of her veracity, at once cried out, "As you love your eyes, *ai khanum doudou*—oh my young mistress! come, we have guests; come, enlighten our countenances, there is here nothing to fear!"

Upon this all at once appeared, before Osmond was in the least prepared for such a vision, the enchanting Ayesha in all her loveliness. She stood before him the personification of virgin modesty; lowly in her bearing, though dignified in look and manner, blushing, though still unembarrassed, she seemed to throw an atmosphere of purity and en-

chantment around her. To see her thus, none could do otherwise than gaze in admiration, and remain silent for fear of offending. Osmond had never beheld such unrivalled beauty. Travelling where women never appear without being so closely veiled that their faces are almost expunged from the catalogue of nature's excellencies, accustomed to deal only with rough and bearded men, and particularly after his long confinement in a sick room, he felt his heart expand at the sight of this piece of human perfection, in the same manner as if an angel had appeared. The thrill of astonishment, admiration, and sudden love, which came over the sick youth as the flash of Ayesha's beauty beamed upon him, produced so lasting an effect that it influenced every action of his future life. Ayesha had obeyed the call of a voice well known to her, little thinking before whom she was about to appear; and such was the suddenness of her feeling at the novelty of her situation, that for a moment she was bewildered to a degree that made her forget her exposure, and thus allowed herself to

be fully gazed at before she retreated to her veil, which she had left where she had been seated.

Ayesha had a great partiality for the old Caterina, who was a constant attendant at Suleiman Aga's house, and thus she had not hesitated to attend her call; but when she perceived how she was surrounded, all she could say was, in a tone of surprise and mortification, "Caterina! this is a crime!" She then retreated whence she came; but, at the same time, not without having remarked the graceful and interesting form of Osmond, stretched on his sick bed, whose ardent and impassioned expression of countenance helped to renew the impression which he had made upon her at their first meeting. The whole action of this incident was almost instantaneous, and took place in nearly as short a time as it has taken to narrate.

The impression which the appearance of Ayesha had made upon Mustafa and Stasso was nearly as great as upon Osmond, although the fascination had worked in a different manner. Upon Mustafa, who was a complete Turk

in his ideas and prejudices about women, it produced a sensation of jealousy that so much beauty and charm should have met any man's eyes but his own ; and although he was like one bewildered by some sudden flash as he sat in darkness, overpowered with a feeling very much like love, and overjoyed at a sight so rare and unexpected, yet he became angry at what he esteemed a dereliction of the respect due to his own countrywomen. His first impulse was to make an angry exclamation against the old woman.

“What are you about,” said he, “you old filth-carrier? Are you turned mad? do you not see that men are present? Fine doings indeed! In the name of Allah! would you bring the Beyzadeh into trouble, and this daughter of Islam into disgrace?”

“There is no harm done, light of my eyes!” answered Caterina. “It is only Suleiman Aga's daughter. Franks are of no consequence; their women have no veils; their eyes are accustomed to the sight of woman's face. Did not I say true?” she continued, turning towards Lord

Osmond; "have I said more than I ought, when I talked to you of the beauty of the maiden?"

"You said too little," answered Osmond, in a serious and musing tone.

"Ah!" continued Caterina, "but she is even better than she looks. You ought to have seen how she attended upon her sick father. As you love your eyes, she knew better how to nurse him than I."

Stasso, who had also been witness to the whole scene, was thrown into a fever of admiration; but the effect it produced upon him was to engender an explosion of maledictions in his mind upon the whole Mahomedan race, for possessing such a treasure of perfection. "May the devil take them all!" said he, in a low and indistinct tone, as he helped his master to descend into his room. "We also have our beauties; go to the Fanari, go to Tino; but, in truth, this maiden is unlike anything I have ever seen before. She can't be either Greek or Turk; she must be a Frank!"

When Osmond was left alone with his Greek, he said with great earnestness, "Stasso,

did you see the maiden? Can she really be a Turkish girl?"

"What do I know, and what can I say?" said Stasso: "how can she be anything but Turkish, unless she be an angel sent to us by the Holy Virgin," crossing himself the while, "by way of compassion, for having detained us so long among these barbarians?"

"Have you seen her mother?" asked Osmond; "they say she was originally a Greek, or an Armenian. Caterina tells me she is a bad woman."

"We will learn how that is," said Stasso: "if she be a Greek, I will find out the she-devil, and cut off my mustaches if I do not make her tell me why and wherefore she has thus damned herself by forsaking her faith."

"Can the maiden really have been angry," inquired his master, "at having been seen by us? Women are not naturally given to hide their charms."

"What can I say, sir?" said Stasso: "these are Turkish women — they will show their faces when there is no one by to witness their

so doing ; but, otherwise, they will rave and rant when any one ventures to look at them. In truth, this maiden is not like other Turkish maidens. Whence she comes, who can say ?”

Stasso left his master with the determination of making acquaintance, if possible, with Ayesha’s mother, and conceiving it likely, after what had just taken place on the terrace, that she might have proceeded thither in person, he returned there in the hope of meeting her. The day was drawing to a close when he appeared, and, true enough, the first object which caught his eye as he looked towards Suleiman Aga’s house, was a woman with a veil carelessly thrown over her head, whom he immediately conjectured to be the Lady Zabetta.

“ *Kale espera, keramou*,—good evening, my madam,” said Stasso, trying her in his own language.

“ What !” said she in a tone of surprise at hearing this address, for Stasso was dressed like a Turk, and gave himself out as a Boshnak, a native of Bosnia, “ What ! are you a

Greek? How came you here? How do you know that I am a Greek?"

She said this with some little asperity and embarrassment, although there was evident pleasure in her manner at having met with a countryman; for modern Greeks very much hang together, whatever may be their places of birth. When she perceived how very handsome the person was who had addressed her, and that he was in every way an object fitted to attract a woman's attention, she was not slow in dropping her shawl and exhibiting to Stasso a face of uncommon attraction. Her nose was aquiline, her eyes were jet black, shadowed by strongly-arched brows, and a profusion of dark hair, tressed and braided and turned up in the manner peculiar to Turkish married women, was arranged about her face and shoulders. She was tall, her person had been finely shaped but was now coarse and inclining to corpulency, there was a bad and immodest expression in her countenance, and it was evident that she endeavoured to enhance the power of her charms by paint, and

by the many patches and ornaments much used in the East.

“On approaching her, Stasso thought it right to treat her with all the respect which he would have done had he been addressing a Mahomedan woman.

“Yes,” he said, “I am a Greek, and your countryman; I am at your service, and I kiss your hands.”

At these words her face relaxed into a coquettish smile, and she answered, “You are welcome; from whence are you?”

“I am a Sedikieuli, near Smyrna,” said he; “what can I do?”

“And what are you come to do here?” she inquired.

“I am servant to an English Beyzadeh; we come from Persia, and are travelling onward to Constantinople.”

“An English nobleman!” she exclaimed, with an inquiring accent. “And he—wherefore does he travel? Is he an *Elchi*—ambassador, or what?”

“He travels for his pleasure,” said Stasso;

“he is a rich man, and a great personage in his own country.”

“What is his name?” she eagerly inquired.

“His name,” said Stasso, “is Osmond; his father is a great Bey among the English. We are detained here by his illness, and if it pleases God, when he is well, we shall proceed on our journey. But you, Kadun! how does it happen, that one so handsome, so superior to Turks, is found living in this wretched place?”

Without heeding his question, although evidently delighted by his flattery, she inquired, “Has he ever been at Athens?”

“At Athens!” said Stasso; “yes, we have been at Athens. Eh! where have we not been? there is neither a hole nor a corner, a stick nor a stone, that we have not seen, in Greece, in Egypt, in Syria, or in Persia. But, Kadun, as you love your eyes, can you be from Athens, for it appears to me by your accent that you must be from the Islands?”

At this question she seemed perplexed and embarrassed, and after a long pause said,

“I am a Tiniote — from Tino,” and then laughingly added, “I am a *Touchan*.” *

“What do you say?” exclaimed Stasso; “are you really from Tino? I am acquainted with almost all the Tiniotes, both at Smyrna and Pera. Of what family are you in Tino?”

With a sigh she answered, “Why should I tell you my name? What can it be to you? I am now a Turkish woman, and the wife of a Mussulman.”

“This is strange!” said Stasso, still pressing her to tell her name; “perhaps I may be acquainted with some of your relations, and may be able to give you some account of them.”

She persisted in withholding her name, although there was a hesitation in her manner which showed that she had much to say, if she could allow herself to speak. She turned the conversation from herself, as if she feared to have already said too much; and with all the

* The Turks have given the nickname of *Touchan*, or hare, to the natives of Tino, owing, we suppose, to their timidity. The Tiniotes furnish servants to the Christians of the East, particularly to Europeans.

inquisitiveness of a Greek, she plied Stasso with every sort of question relating to Lord Osmond: "Was he handsome? Was he young? Was he rich? How long since had he left England? When would he return? Was he fond of the Greeks? Did he like the Turks better? Who were his friends at Constantinople? Who at Athens? How long did he remain there?"

Stasso gave her every information, but could not help being surprised, and even put on his guard, by her manner, which, in a person who seemed to have devoted herself to Turkish life, was strange and mysterious.

At length she asked him a question which still more astonished him—"Tell me," said she, "has he seen my daughter? I know he has—how did he like her?"

Stasso launched out in her praises in a manner that showed what had been the effect produced by her charms, but, again considering that the person who addressed him was a Turkish woman, his astonishment increased.

Their conversation had now lasted until the day had entirely closed; and he who was

never backward in his devotion to female charms, fearful of the consequences of further delay, thought it more prudent to take his leave, still with the strongest desire to see her again, for her brilliant eyes and her coquettish manner had gone far in subduing his heart.

“ We will meet again,” said he, as she was about quitting the terrace. “ As you love your daughter, let me see you to-morrow evening.”

“ Do you forget, brother,” said she, “ that I am a Mussulman’s wife, and that it is unlawful for me to speak to any man, saving to my husband ?” This she spoke with a satirical smile on her lips, as if she would say ‘ I laugh at such nonsense.’

“ What !” exclaimed Stasso, “ you a Greek’s daughter, and care for these bearded Turks ! go, go, we will see each other again.”

Upon this they parted company ; she returned to her harem, whilst he proceeded to give an account of his meeting to his master.

CHAPTER V.

Man is fire and woman tow ; the devil comes and sets them in a blaze.—FIELDING.

BEFORE we proceed farther in our narrative, it is necessary that the reader should be informed of part of Zabetta's history ; the remainder, for the present, must be left in mysterious uncertainty. She was a native of Tino, as she had truly informed Stasso ; and, according to the practice of her countrywomen, quitted that island at an early age, when in the full splendour of her beauty, to enter into service. She began her career at Athens, where her extraordinary charms attracted the attention of the youth of the place, who succeeded, by their flattery and devotion, in entirely turning a head which was naturally full

of levity. Like most Greeks, she was ambitious of distinction, and, finding that those of her own nation who admired her, were not likely to give her that position in life to which she aspired, she listened to the vows of love whispered by a young Turk, whose manly beauty and commanding manners entirely won her heart. He was in the service of the Governor of Athens, and one of his most distinguished officers; but as it would be impossible for him to marry Zabetta, situated as they both were—she being a servant to a rich and powerful foreign family, and he a dependant upon a despotic Governor—they determined to elope from Athens and take refuge in Asia Minor. Their scheme was most successful; unknown to any one, they embarked in a boat bound to Samos, and soon after landed at Scala Nuova, whence they proceeded to Guzzelhissar, where he had an uncle established, rich in lands, and a man of influence in the country. Here she acceded to her husband's wishes to forsake her faith and embrace Mahomedanism, to which, as she was

prevented by no principle, she made no resistance.

Suleiman, for that was his name, was originally from Kars; he became successful in trade, having been noticed and assisted by his uncle at Guzzelhissar; and as soon as he had amassed a sufficient fortune, he determined to settle in his native place. This he did, and became a man of consequence and consideration there. From his youth he had ever been a rigid observer of his faith, and as he advanced in years he encreased in reputation for sanctity and severity of discipline. At the time of our history he was esteemed one of the strictest Mussulmans of Kars.

The mysterious part of Zabetta's history was that which related to Ayesha. Neither she nor her husband could claim her as their daughter, although they had brought her up as such from an infant. As she grew up, her mind and person expanded to a degree of perfection so superior to the natives of the Levant in general, that she became an object of surprise and of admiration to all who knew her.

Her person was a model of perfect symmetry, full of grace in every movement, for she never gave way to that slouching gait which so frequently indicates the indolent Asiatic. Her face was full of the best expression, beaming with benevolence, and softened by a veil of such modesty, that even the rudest of the Mahomedan tribe could not approach her without a feeling of respect. We have already spoken of her beauty, which would have been but a secondary consideration to the perfections of her mind, were it not of that uncommon kind which made it remarkable as a special caprice or interference of Nature in her favour. The beauty of a Turkish woman when discovered peeping from behind the veil with which it is usually covered, cannot fail to strike the beholder who sees it by chance or by stealth, as something infinitely greater than perhaps it really is: but Ayesha would have been considered a first-rate beauty either behind a veil, or in the fullest exposure in any country in the world; and when she first was seen

by Osmond, she appeared fairer than anything he had ever beheld perhaps in Europe or in Asia.

Suleiman Aga, whose nature was kind in the main, although his bigotry was of the fiercest order, adored his adopted daughter, and caused her to be taught everything that belonged to her station. The accomplishments of Turkish women are summed up in a very short list. If they can read and write, they are esteemed as prodigies. Music and dancing being looked upon as the province of professional performers, who are synonymous with people of loose character, the children of respectable parents are not taught these arts, although by way of amusement many sing and play on the tambourine. They spin and embroider; are instructed in forms of speech and politeness; are taught to say their prayers, and read the koran; but every accomplishment soon falls a victim to the idleness and indolence incidental to their mode of life; for scarcely any other method of passing away

time is known except gossiping with a neighbouring harem, going to the hot bath, smoking, and taking a walk to the burying-grounds. Ayesha soon overcame the difficulties of writing, and she rivalled the first Mollahs in the niceties of their art. She read too with facility every different sort of character, from the crabbed *Skekesteh* to the clear *Nustalik*; and, after she had duly digested her koran, the history of the Prophet, his sayings, and every subject relating to her faith, she read poetry and history in a manner that astonished every one. After this it will not be thought extraordinary that old Caterina should have been surprised at Osmond's ignorance of the fame of Suleiman Aga's daughter.

Her reputed father had himself taken great pains to make her a faithful disciple of Islam, and although he was frequently at a loss how to answer her inquiries, and to satisfy her doubts concerning those points in the Mahomedan faith which can never stand before right reason, still he had succeeded in bringing her to observe all the forms of his religion, its

ablutions, and its stated hours of prayer, with scrupulous precision.

On the other hand, her mother, who, as she grew older, would often revert to her conversion to Mahomedanism with shame and confusion, and who was acquainted with the rudiments of her own faith sufficiently to enable her to make them a subject of thought, would frequently give vent to her feelings on that subject to her supposed daughter, and instil into her mind all that she knew concerning the Christian religion. She secretly wished that the child might be saved through the intercession of Jesus, rather than trust to the promises of happiness made by Mahomet; and so much did she dwell upon this in her conversations with Ayesha, that the poor maiden's mind at length became bewildered, and in fact she was left without any fixed principle, for, whilst she performed the genuflections of the Mahomedans, she would frequently address herself mentally to the Virgin and the Saints. Her hatred to unbelievers, prescribed by the Koran, would often be checked by the

reflections raised by what she heard from her mother ; and when she was told that it was lawful to kill those who disclaimed her Prophet, her own benevolent nature, aided by her good sense, would tell her that such could not be the intention of an all-wise Creator.

Zabetta's character had been truly defined by the old Caterina—she might be called a misfortune. Her liveliness, and the spirit of intrigue common to her nation, shone conspicuous in her actions ; the dullness and sameness of the existence which she led as a Mahomedan's wife had produced so much impatience and irritability in her whole being, that she became the torment of those around her—her violence was uncontrollable. From abhorring her mode of life, she was soon led to detest her husband, and to abominate his sect ; and so much discontent pervaded every thought and feeling of her mind, that she did nothing but revolve schemes for emancipating herself from her present miseries. At one time she determined upon leaving her husband and returning to her own faith and country, but then

she was stopped by fear of the awful consequences of such a step. At another, she would insist upon Suleiman Aga's quitting the exile of Kars, in order to seek the pleasures of Stamboul; but this he always strenuously resisted. She had no one to whom she could open her mind except Ayesha, who, far from encouraging her views, endeavoured only to soften her irritability and to make her contented with her lot. It will not then be thought extraordinary that she should have joyfully seized the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Stasso, and of entering into the conversation with him which we have already repeated.

Upon hearing of Osmond, and finding him so near a neighbour, an undefined hope of being able, through his agency, to leave her present miseries and return once again to the joys of a life of pleasure, rose in her breast. She had in her early youth known and lived among Europeans: — his presence awoke all her recollections of those days, so much happier than the present; and as fast as she allowed her

imagination to devise modes of future enjoyment, so fast did she lose sight of the danger likely to threaten her were her scheme ever to be put into execution.

She was fully sensible of the extent of Ayesha's beauty, and upon its power she laid the principal foundation of her hopes. Could she but lead on the young Englishman to fall in love with her daughter, she conceived that, with the help of his servant Stasso, whose heart she easily saw might become her own, her evasion from Kars, its horrors, and her husband, might easily be effected; and to the furtherance of that object she now determined to bend every effort.

When Zabetta had quitted Stasso after their conversation on the terrace, she retreated to the harem, her imagination all alive upon the views to which that conversation had given rise. Her apartment was a large handsome room, fitted up on three sides with ranges of low ottomans, backed by silken cushions, the windows of which looked upon a small garden filled with flowers, and also enjoyed an exten-

sive view over the adjacent plain and its surrounding mountains. The severity of the winter had now passed away, and had given place to the softness of the opening spring. The shades of the evening were succeeded by the soothing influence of a full moon, which shed its sober light over every object far and wide, and gleamed into the room through the open casements.

Zabetta found Ayesha seated in a corner of the apartment, in a musing attitude; her cheek resting upon her hand, whilst her eyes wandered over the expanse before her. Her thoughts, however, were occupied with the occurrence of the morning, and sensations to which she had hitherto been a stranger filled her breast. Since her first meeting with Osmond, whom she had then taken for one of her own countrymen, she had never ceased to dwell in idea upon his expressive countenance, his commanding person, and, more than all, upon the courtesy and deference of his manner: a proceeding so totally different from that of Turks in general to one of her sex,

that she could not help drawing a comparison very much in his favour. Still, whenever she caught her thoughts stealing towards the contemplation of his superior excellence, she would check them; for her innate modesty would remind her that they were enemies to a maiden's purity, and her good sense would tell her that it was folly to waste her time upon the recollection of one whom she might never see again. But the event of the morning had completely destroyed all her equanimity, and, passing from that quiet of mind which had hitherto marked the even tenor of her life, she found herself all at once entangled in a labyrinth of conflicting emotions. On the one hand, she had been taught that it was a crime to hold intercourse with unbelievers, and she knew that Osmond was a Christian; moreover, she had been brought up in the idea that no Mahomedan woman could ever show her face to a man. On the other hand, from her mother's counteracting interference, particularly in favour of Christians, many of the prejudices which are so strong with Turkish women in

general, had been much softened, and she felt herself allowed to look upon Osmond with a more favourable eye than she otherwise would have done. Besides, she had to contend with that propensity to romance which lurks at the bottom of every maiden's heart, and which softens her feelings towards every thing in the shape of man, particularly towards one, whatever might be his faith, having beauty and amiability to recommend him. From what she had already seen of Osmond, a net of such close texture had been worked round her heart, that it was enslaved ere she knew how.

When Zabetta entered the room, Ayesha's mind was absorbed in the minutest investigation of everything which had taken place at her first interview with Osmond in the street; and then at the second on the terrace. She had begun to persuade herself that *kismet*, or fate, that expounder of every Mahomedan's difficulty, had much to do with both these events; and having nearly settled that point to her satisfaction, she was far gone in the speculation whether that same *kismet* would again

operate in her favour, and procure her a third interview.

“Ayesha my lamb,” said her mother, in a softened and cheering tone of voice, “do you know what has happened? I, too, have seen one of the strangers who lives with Bogos the dyer. Is it not most extraordinary? There must be something in it.”

“It is strange,” answered the maiden, colouring at the same time. “We are taught that it is a crime to talk to heretics; but what can oppose destiny? Was it the sick stranger?” she inquired in a tremulous voice.

“No,” said Zabetta, “it was his servant: and do you know he is one of my own countrymen; he is a Greek, and a *kalo paidi*—a good youth. Oh what did I not feel when I spoke to him in my own tongue! my heart beat at my breast as if I had heard the sound of my brother’s or my father’s voice calling to me from Tino. But what can we do? Here we are in this odious place, living day after day and year after year, like owls in a deserted tower, unseen and unknown, except by a few

faces that are grown as common and as familiar to us as chains are to a prisoner. *Ai janum, Stamboul*—oh my soul, Constantinople!" she exclaimed with fervour: "could we but once get there, then Zabetta would have nothing more to wish for."

"*Allah kerim*—God is great!" exclaimed Ayesha, with a profound sigh: "oh, mother, let us be resigned to whatever it may please Allah to dispense to his unworthy creatures."

"*Allah kerim* is all very well," said Zabetta with impatience, "but in the mean while here we are at Kars. We must leave it, happen what will. I will no longer be a captive—I will no more waste my life in this odious bondage."

Ayesha became alarmed at the violent, impassioned manner with which Zabetta uttered these words, and in the most soothing tone said, "Times will alter—nothing is stable in this life: see, the winter is gone and spring is come—God directs all for the best. I am young, and ought not to offer advice; but let me intreat my mother to have patience,

and, as we may hope for blessing, let us wait with resignation the decrees of unchangeable destiny."

"Ayesha!" exclaimed her mother, making an effort to suppress the violence of her feeling, "did you speak to the Englishman to-day when you saw him upon the terrace?"

"Heaven forbid!" said she; "speak? no: I saw him for a moment—but speak to him? no. Am I not a maiden of Islam? Are we not taught to shun heretics?"

"My heart Ayesha!" said Zabetta, "Muslimans teach such things, and assert that they are proper; but they are but a few compared to the rest of the world. The greatest part of mankind see and converse with women—and they are God's creatures too—they cannot all be wrong. There can be no sin in conversing with our fellow-creatures."

"Ahi!" exclaimed Ayesha, after a pause, "one should think that what you say is true; but my father insists otherwise, and he has the Prophet on his side."

"Let us leave the Prophet to himself

awhile," said Zabetta, with a peevish voice and in evident agitation; "let me tell you one thing, Ayesha, which you have never yet been told—you were not born a child of Islam—you have more to do with Franks than you can suppose."

"How?" said Ayesha, with the greatest earnestness, and apparently roused from her resigned and passive state, "as you love your child, as you cherish your faith, tell me more—I know nothing about myself. Am I not your child?—have I not a father?—tell me how I am then related to Franks!"

Zabetta felt that she had struck upon the right chord, in thus attempting to draw the maiden's mind from her devotedness to her Mahomedan duties. Who she really was, was a profound secret only known to herself, and partially to Suleiman Aga, and she had never said so much on that head before to Ayesha; but she felt it necessary, in order to create a great interest in her heart towards Christians, to make this disclosure. "The time is not yet come, my daughter," she said, "when I can

explain to you all that fate has ordained—you are young—there is a time for all things;—but be this known to you, that you must not look upon Franks with the eye of hatred, but, on the contrary, open the heart of friendship to them—they are your brothers. As your mother I tell you this—as a Mahomedan's wife I order you to keep it secret—it is a secret of the greatest importance to us both. If you can speak to the Englishman our neighbour, do so with caution, but without fear.”

Ayesha at these words became mute with astonishment; such a permission, although it infused a secret and subtle pleasure throughout her whole frame, affected her in the same manner as the prescription of a new physician acts upon a desponding patient who has ever been taught to look upon wine as prohibited and is all at once allowed to drink it. She distrusted her mother's words, and still she clung to them with ecstasy. Whilst the imprecations of the Koran against unbelievers rang in her ears, the knowledge of having been born one

herself, perhaps of having European blood in her veins, acted as an antidote does to poison. It was plain that, had Osmond at that moment stood before her, she would neither have hid her face from him, nor refused to speak to him.

But, instead of Osmond, the silken curtain over the door was thrown up, and in walked Suleiman Aga in person. He was a grave and dignified Turk, of noble appearance, clothed in long robes furnished with light furs adapted to the season, and wearing on his head a *caouk*, that is, a stiff cloth cap, around which was wound a band of white muslin. At the sight of his wife his features assumed an appearance of humility: he had expected only to see Ayesha, and had come with an open and unreserved face and manner, but so afraid was he of exciting Zabetta's violence, that whenever she appeared he adopted the least offensive and most submissive attitude. Turks in general esteem quiet as the greatest of blessings—they hate noise:—a seat in the corner of their couch, listening to the plashing of the never-

ceasing fountain, smoking their soothing chibouk and watching the smoke which they emit into the air until it dissolves into nothing, or listening to the conversation of a friend which may afford some little excitement, is the sort of recreation they most relish; and to obtain this they will show powers of endurance to be surpassed by no stoic. Once put them in a fury, they instantly go to extremes—they kill or are killed; to cut a matter short, they order execution right or wrong, and then return to their pipe or their fountain, as if nothing had happened.

When Zabetta saw her husband enter, the humility of his aspect, instead of softening her feelings towards him, immediately impelled her to place herself in an attitude of open hostility; her brow lowered, her eye became fixed, her head swerved neither to the right nor the left; the recollection of every evil, real or imaginary, which she suffered at his hands, arose uncontrolled in her breast; whatever she might have been the moment before he entered, all at once it occurred to her that she now

was an injured woman; she felt that all her griefs were owing to her husband alone—that he had been unjust in loving her—in seducing her to marry him—in dragging her from her own country—in becoming rich—in settling himself in his native city. This was her usual conduct, whenever the unfortunate Suleiman happened to cross the path of the most susceptible Zabetta.

“What do you want?” said she to him, as soon as he had taken his seat quietly before her on the ottoman; “whenever we least desire your company, you are sure to appear.”

“I came to see Ayesha,” answered Suleiman with great deference; “had I known you were here, I would have stayed away, since you abhor my presence.”

“That is so like you!” exclaimed his wife, in a burst of rage; “you will go any distance to see Ayesha, but wherever I am, you shun me—you love any thing but your wife.”

“You said you did not wish to see me,” said Suleiman, still in a softer tone; “what can I do?”

“ I did—and do,” said his wife ; “ but what has that to do with your neglect of me ? Am I not the worst-used woman in Kars ?—In Kars did I say ?—in all Turkey ? ”

“ I am always ready, Zabetta,” answered the husband, “ to act as you desire. Is there anything in reason which you require, which I do not immediately grant ? ”

“ That is good ! that is true indeed ! Allah, Allah ! ” said Zabetta, “ do not I ask you to take me from this horrid place to which you have brought me—where I am shut up like a wild beast in a cage—where I see nothing but Kurds, devil-worshippers, and savages, and do you not refuse me ? Answer me that, O man ! ”

“ Light of my eyes ! ” replied the impassive Suleiman, “ how can we leave this place without ruining ourselves ? All I have is here. You would have me go to Constantinople, where I know no one ; here I am known and respected.”

“ You, you ! all is for *you*,” said his wife, “ and nothing for me. *Mashallah* !—praise be to Allah ! you are to be thought of before

everything; that long beard of yours must be worshipped and adored, whilst I am left in a corner like a pair of old slippers! Go, go, I spit upon such a beard."

"You are unjust, Zabetta," said Suleiman; "I say again, is there any thing in reason that you require which I ever refuse? Whatever clothes, whatever food, whatever servants, whatever amusements you wish for, do I not give you? After all, there is such a thing as justice in the world."

"Nonsense — dirt — filth — all you say is such," exclaimed the angry woman. "Was it for this that I forsook my country, my friends, my faith, my all, and then am to be told that like a child I may dress myself in fine clothes, that I may eat sweetmeats to keep me from crying, or may walk in the burying-ground, and sit upon a tombstone by way of cheering my spirits? You are an ass, you are a fool. I was not born a Greek woman for nothing; I know the difference between black and white."

Upon hearing these odious epithets, the

colour of the patient man rose a little in his cheeks, there was a slight distension of his beard and mustaches, and there broke out a slender wrinkle on his brow, but still he remained passive. "You say a great deal too much," said he; "if I had beaten you, you could not complain more."

"Beaten me indeed! beaten me, do you say?" roared out the now furious Zabetta, "I should like to see that! Are you become mad? Will you beat me? Am I to be treated as your slave? You wretch—you vile Osmanli, I will show you that I am a Greek woman. Go, I abhor you, I detest you. There, take that," upon which she pulled off both her slippers, and, one after the other, threw them with all her strength at her husband. She then rushed out of the room, slamming the doors behind her, and knocking and beating about every thing which came in her way, her passage through the house being traced by the stamp of her feet, which at length was heard on the terrace overhead.

One slipper had hit Suleiman on the face,

the other on the head,—still he said nothing; he took them up from the ottoman where they had fallen, laid them quietly on the floor, and then turning to Ayesha, who was suffering the deepest anguish at beholding this scene, said with a sigh, as he slowly shook his head, “*Chok chay*—that is much,” and then mumbled within his breath his profession of faith, “There is but one Allah, and Mahomed is his prophet.”

Ayesha rose from her seat, and with the tenderest expression of interest in her face, approached her father, and said, “Be not angry, O my father!—my poor mother is sick in her mind; forgive her, as you love Allah, forgive her.”

“It is nothing,” said Suleiman calmly; “be you but well and happy, Ayesha, and all will be well: God is great—God is merciful!”

Ayesha said nothing more, but sat in silence near the oppressed man, who had before but too frequently been obliged to stifle his feelings at these ebullitions of his wife’s ill temper; and as she drew off his mind to other

subjects, he gradually resumed his usual calm deportment, and with the help of his never-failing pipe and his resignation to *kismet*, was soon restored to that torpid and indolent state which it was his ambition never to lose.

CHAPTER VI.

Stand, and deceive me not ! Oh, noble young man,
I love thee with my soul, but dare not say it !

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE account which Stasso gave to Lord Osmond of his interview with Zabetta, had excited all his curiosity. There was something so strange in the circumstance of a Mahomedan woman taking so much apparent interest in an infidel and a Frank, about whom it appeared to him impossible she could know anything, that he became quite uneasy until he had cleared up the mystery. But what most struck him was her anxiety to know whether he had seen her daughter. He could scarcely believe his servant as he dwelt much upon this part of the conversation ; the length of time which had elapsed since Zabetta had been at

Athens, made it quite improbable that they could have met, or that any part of his conduct there could directly or indirectly have any influence upon her or her daughter at Kars. There was evidently a mystery, of the existence of which Stasso was also convinced; "*Ekhi kateti, Effendi!*—there is something, my master—there is something," repeatedly exclaimed Stasso, as he talked the matter over.

"You must discover more this evening," said Osmond; "ask the mother what she means, whether I can do anything for either her or her daughter."

"What do you say, Effendi? she is as cunning as a fox, the she-devil! She will say nothing but what she pleases; but, in truth, there is something, of that I am certain."

Stasso concluded every phrase upon the subject of his interview with Zabetta, with the words "there is something," accompanied by a shake of the head; and he promised to himself in succeeding conversations to do his best to discover what that "something" might be. His master ascended the terrace with less difficulty

than he had done on the preceding day, and sat there until the dews of the evening drove him below, but he was not fortunate enough to obtain a glimpse of Ayesha. Upon his return to his chamber he waited with impatience for his servant, in order that he might be informed of anything new which he might have discovered, but all he could learn was a repetition of what he had before heard, and nothing which could throw light upon the real history of the maiden.

Zabetta had evidently been exerting herself to make Stasso her admirer, but not a word more did she say touching her own history. The only difference between this interview and the last was, that she brought her daughter with her, who did not open her lips, but remained closely veiled whilst it lasted.

This circumstance set Osmond's imagination on fire; he saw that he too might have the pleasure of her conversation if his health permitted it, and he was delighted to find, upon waking the next morning, how much the swelling in his knee had abated, and how essentially

better he felt. He then dismissed the old Caterina, to whom he behaved with a liberality which brought forth all her gratitude; and sent for Mustafa, in order that they might devise plans for leaving Kars. To his surprise, instead of finding that worthy all impatience to depart, he found him full of *Bakalum*—we shall see! *Inshallah*—if it pleases God, and all those little procrastinating phrases behind which a Turk is sure to entrench himself when he wishes to remain *in statu quo*. The fact is, that one glimpse which the too susceptible Mustafa had enjoyed of Ayesha's unrivalled beauty, had so enthralled his heart, that, omitting even to cast a thought upon a certain existing wife and small family whom he had left behind at Constantinople, he had in his idleness fairly set about inquiring how he might secure to himself, as a second helpmate through life, this precious gem, and had persuaded himself into an assurance, that a Tatar Aga, residing at the Fortunate Gate of Royal Splendour, the confidential messenger of an ambassador of Stamboul, the owner of a com-

fortable monthly stipend, and one much respected at post-houses, was quite a personage of suitable respectability to solicit in marriage the daughter of an Ayan of Kars. He had in consequence, as a preliminary to further operations, furbished up his weather-beaten face by frequent attendance at the hot-bath. Vainly did he ponder over the scanty allowance of mustache which Nature had doled out to him, and every method which he devised of increasing the store seemed to baffle his ingenuity. If he dyed his few hairs black, he found that, like radishes on a miser's board, they became individuated, and were easily counted ; if he abandoned them to their original sandy-coloured insignificancy, his face could scarcely assert the man, and he was left that most despised of all creatures in a Turk's estimation, a *sakal-siz* — a no-beard. Then he was short of stature, but that could not be helped ; he was also thin, but then he found, by heaping on more garments to his original stock, he might increase in size to any extent he chose. Accordingly, he bought a new furred jacket,

duly trimmed and braided ; he spread out the circumference of his *shalwars*, or trowsers, to such a size, that his small legs lay hidden within their folds in somewhat the same proportions that a pitchfork has to a haystack, whilst their bulk almost prevented him from walking. A small muslin embroidered handkerchief, which he threw over his shoulder, and an amber-headed pipe in his hand, made him up all together, so he flattered himself, a person of irresistible attraction to the object of his wishes.

Thus equipped, his pistols protruding from his girdle, and his steps measured with more than usual dignity, he betook himself to promenading near the house of Suleiman Aga, hoping that his beautiful daughter might, as she gazed through her latticed window, be smitten with his appearance ; or that, if she issued forth to walk, he might meet her and attract her notice. Alas ! he laboured in vain ; he spread his plumage to no purpose ; he might as well have bought neither jacket nor trowsers ; nobody came, no one looked from the lattice.

At length he bethought himself of enlisting the old Caterina in his service, for he knew that such things were often done, marriages were often brought about by intervening old women, and he knew that this aged individual was a constant inmate in Suleiman Aga's harem.

The first time she appeared at the dyer's, he accosted her with more courtesy than he had done on the last occasion when he had seen her as an operator upon his master's knee, and said to her, "*Bana bak ai guzum!*—look at me, oh my eyes! *Gel!*—come hither, I have words to say to you!"

The crone, cheered at being thus addressed by a true believer, lent a willing ear to his invitation, and she squatted herself down before him. "What may there be at your service?" said she.

"You are a person of sense," said he; "you understand at a word. That daughter of Suleiman Aga, whom we saw the other day on the terrace, is no indifferent person;—do you understand me?"

“ Yes yes,” said the old Caterina, with a dogged sort of nod, “ I understand ; there is not such another thing in the world—What of her ?”

“ What of her !” said Mustafa, in surprise ; “ do not you understand me ? I thought you were no fool ! When a man inquires after a maiden, what thought can he have but of marriage ?”

“ Do you want Ayesha in marriage ?” exclaimed the old woman in a tone of the greatest surprise, as if Mustafa had proposed to herself :—“ *Ey vah !* — look ! see ! where are you, and where is Ayesha ? Are you mad ?” Upon which she burst out into a fit of laughter, which put the poor Tatar into a strange embarrassment.

“ You are mad,” said Mustafa. “ A girl, after all, is nothing but a girl ; and when she acquires a husband, what can she want more ? I am a man—I am a Tatar Aga—find such another in Kars ! If you are an ass, I have nothing to say to you ; if you are not, speak to Suleiman Aga and his daughter for me,

and let me hear what they will answer. I have money, Mashallah ! and want for nothing."

"Suleiman Aga, do you say?" said Caterina : "where have you lived, when you count Suleiman Aga among men? *Bosh der!*—he is nothing ! his wife, the khanum Zabetta, if you please ! But, *deh!* she looks for a Pasha at least for her daughter, if not for a Vizir, or a Capudan Pasha. What are you thinking of, O man ?"

Mustafa pulled up his mustache, applied his hand to his chin, looked foolish, looked grand, humble, and indignant, by turns, and broke up his conference with the old woman without saying a word more than "*Bakalum!*—we shall see !" But still, as he walked away from her, he did not relinquish his hope of making himself agreeable to the maiden, and treasured up in his mind the knowledge which he had acquired of her transcendant beauty, which cheered his thoughts through the progress of each intervening pipe.

Osmond, finding that he was increasing rapidly in health, began seriously to turn his

thoughts towards the prosecution of his journey; but still he felt himself, as it were, spell-bound by the neighbourhood of the beautiful Ayesha, and he determined to gratify his ardent curiosity to know something more of her history, by getting, if possible, acquainted with her. On that very night he resolved to accompany Stasso to the terrace, in the hope that she would again make her appearance with her mother; and moreover, he took every precaution that this step should be kept secret, both from Mustafa, and the inmates of the house.

Accordingly, as soon as the last cries of the muezzins from the minarets, calling the faithful to prayers, had died away upon the ear, Stasso, preceding his master, first set foot on the terrace, and to his joy perceived that Zabetta and Ayesha were at their post. Upon this he made a sign to Lord Osmond, who immediately joined him.

Ayesha had evidently not been prepared for this encounter; and when she saw Osmond appear, she shrank behind her mother, cover-

ing herself with her veil, and feeling at his approach an emotion which those who have been assailed with the tender passion for the first time alone can define. But she was perplexed how to act. Her Mahomedan education would have taught her to fly from the presence of an infidel, whilst the presence of her mother seemed to secure for her every protection that she could require.

Osmond received from Zabetta every encouragement which flattery and a gracious manner could afford. She laid aside the haughty demeanour of a Mahomedan, and became at once the fawning and cringing Greek. Renegades, he had always heard, were infinitely more intolerant and intemperate in their religious zeal than original Mussulmans, but here he found the contrary ; everything he heard from Zabetta tended to show how discontented she was in her present situation, and how much she despised those by whom she was surrounded.

“ See,” said she, “ what a miserable destiny is mine, to have been thrown among such a people, and to be an inhabitant of so ill-con-

ditioned a place as this! You, Effendi, who have seen Constantinople and the world, you will have pity upon us poor castaways, who are cooped up here in hopeless exile;" and then she added, as if in joke, although meant in earnest, "Will you not take us with you?"

Osmond was by her manner and language forcibly impressed with the idea that she was acting a part, and that she had some latent design upon him. There was evidently some mystery attached to her, and he felt that it was principally connected with the history of her supposed daughter. He answered Zabetta with great frankness and courtesy, and whilst he encouraged her confidence, he endeavoured to draw from her such an account of herself as might clear up what he wished to ascertain concerning Ayesha. But she studiously kept from him such parts of her history as were connected with that of the maiden, although she evidently said and did everything which might create in his breast an interest in her favour.

Ayesha, in the mean while, had been so struck

by the voice, the manner, and the refinement of Osmond, so unlike to anything which she had met with amongst her own countrymen, that her eyes were riveted on his face as he spoke, and her ears open to catch with avidity the words he uttered. Some men have more than others the power of engendering confidence in the breast of woman, and of these Osmond was one. He listened with deference to what Zabetta said ; he appeared to take interest in her words, and the answers he gave had reference only to her feelings, and not to his own. His quickness of observation soon enabled him to judge what might be passing in Ayesha's mind as he addressed her mother, and, fearful of alarming her timidity by too abruptly addressing her, he did not allow himself to speak to her until he perceived that he had made some progress in breaking down her Mahomedan prejudices. He could not prevent himself from occasionally casting a glance upon her beautiful countenance, and she seemed grateful for this tacit respect to her situation. At length, when, in answer to Zabetta's repeated wish of ac-

companying him to Constantinople, he said, "Would that it were possible for me to put such a scheme into execution! how happy should I be could I but rescue so much beauty and worth from neglect, and exhibit them to my own nation!" Ayesha smiled and shook her head sorrowfully: upon which, Osmond, venturing to speak to her, said with great interest in his manner, "But I fear that our destinies have been cast in a different mould!"

"*Allah bilir*—God alone knows!" said Ayesha, with an averted head and a suppressed sigh.

These words caused a thrill to run through the very being of Osmond; he had never before heard so bewitching a voice, whose tones implied so much feeling.

"Could those destinies be changed," said Osmond, "and would one so charming condescend to receive me as her friend and protector, I would bless the hour which led me to Kars!"

"But not the hour," said Ayesha, "which led to that fatal accident."

“What do you say?” exclaimed Osmond; “that accident has been my only joy; without it I should never have seen you; without it I should never have imagined that you could take any interest in my fate. The recollection of that one moment has imprinted your image in my mind for ever.”

“What do you say?” said Ayesha, her breast heaving with confusion, whilst crimson blushes overspread her cheeks, at the same time partially drawing her veil across her face; “I surely can never be of so much value to you as you seem to think. You do not, cannot know me.”

“Of no value to me,” said Osmond, “who have never before seen anything like you! What do you say? my imagination has never been able to conceive such excellence! No, I do not, and cannot know you, you say true; my weak mind will never be able to appreciate your worth.”

“Sir, desist,” said Ayesha; “I am a poor weak girl, and am not accustomed to hear such flattering words. We have not been bred in

cities, and we are the children of sincerity. Besides," she slowly said with a deep-drawn sigh, "it is improper for me to speak to you—I am a child of Islam! You despise our Prophet and condemn our religion."

Osmond could have caught her in his arms as she uttered these words, there was such thorough humility in her whole manner. Far from that arrogance of the Mahomedan who holds the Christian in contempt, she, on the contrary, seemed to esteem herself as nothing, and tacitly to imply her inferiority before one whom she felt so much her superior.

"Heaven forbid," said he with animation, "that I should despise any one, or that I should ever venture to condemn a thing so sacred as religion! Are we not all creatures of one God?—Do not think so ill of me."

"I cannot think ill of you," said Ayesha; "but still we have different duties to perform, and I have been taught that it is sinful to talk to a *giaour*—an unbeliever."

"Ah! say not so—do not refuse to talk to me; you would not harm any one, every word

and every look of yours tells me that : you cannot refuse to talk to me ; you would not make me miserable ?”

This argument had a strong effect, for it had never entered the head of Ayesha that she could ever make any one miserable, and she looked up into the face of Osmond as if she would have said—“What am I then to do between my duty and my inclination ?” He saw her perplexity and pressed her no more, but, glancing from the subject, drew her on to talk upon other matters, for he was anxious to ascertain what might be the powers of her mind upon such points as were likely to have made up the education of a Turkish girl. He was surprised and delighted to find how true were her observations, what a sense she had of justice, and, notwithstanding the warp which she had received from her religious instruction, how liberal and unprejudiced was the general cast of her mind. She appeared so alive to any words of instruction which casually fell from Osmond, that she questioned him over and over again, and seemed

to cling to him as an oracle, as one who would dissipate that mist of ignorance in which she seemed aware that she had hitherto lived. There was something so endearing in her manner, as with great simplicity she asked questions relating to Europe and Europeans, that Osmond's interest was most sensibly awakened in the desire of administering to her improvement, putting aside his admiration for her unrivalled beauty ; and he would willingly have passed away the whole night in giving instruction to such a pupil, but Zabetta, announced that it was time to retire.

During the conversation of Osmond with her daughter, Zabetta had been taken up with Stasso, who had again endeavoured to learn more particulars of her history, but to no purpose. She betrayed much alarm when she heard that preparations were making for his master's departure, for that event would destroy the scheme which she had been planning for emancipating herself from her present situation ; and she immediately began to revolve in her mind how she could cast impediments in his way.

She had heard from the old Caterina the effect which the beauty of her daughter had produced upon Mustafa, and as she knew that Tatars held the issues of departure in their hands, from their influence at post-houses, she soon determined to play him off in furtherance of her scheme.

Upon quitting the terrace that night, she made an appointment for meeting on the ensuing evening, to which Osmond, excited as he had been by his interview with Ayesha, eagerly assented; and as soon as she had returned to her own apartment, she sent a message to Mustafa, that, if he would call at the door of Suleiman Aga's harem early in the morning, she would see and converse with him.

Osmond retired from the terrace perfectly entranced by a feeling of love, pity, and esteem, for the enchanting person with whom he had conversed. He had made acquaintance with a character as novel as it was interesting; he had found a mind capable of the most enlarged and exalted ideas, shackled by prejudice and enveloped in ignorance, it is

true, but seemingly bent upon overcoming the obstacles by which it was beset, and even in its present state able almost intuitively to form conclusions that would overturn all the errors and fallacies which it had been taught. Osmond could not refrain from deploring that so much beauty and excellence should be buried among infidels and barbarians; and with that tincture of adventure and romance which was mixed up in his character, he had already begun to devise some mode by which he might rescue Ayesha from her degradation, and, having rescued her, so renovate her being as to make her the ornament and the admiration of civilized life. Never were the raw materials of a romantic, disinterested, and devoted passion, so suddenly got together as upon this occasion. On both sides the passion, if indulged, was encompassed by dangers and difficulty. The maiden's faith taught her to hold a *giaour* in abhorrence; she was threatened with every indignity, even with death, if she held intercourse with him. On the other side Osmond would have to encounter the

ridicule of his friends, the disadvantages of a different religion, the danger attendant upon the enterprise, and, after all, the improbability of ever bringing it to a happy issue. Still, every impediment only the more increased the desire; and we need not inform the gentle reader that both parties left the terrace, to use a common expression on so auspicious an occasion, over head and ears in love with each other.

When Mustafa received, through Caterina, Zabetta's message to attend her call, and at the same time an intimation that it had reference to the object of his desires, the usual torpor of his thoughts received a sudden excitement, and, although he had just filled a fresh pipe, and was enjoying the first whiff, he suddenly stopped, knocked the tobacco from the bowl, and starting upon his legs, exclaimed, "*Gidelim*—let us go!"

"Mashallah!" exclaimed Caterina, "you are all at once grown young!"

"What say you, old one?" said Mustafa; "grown young! How much younger would

you have me be?" Upon which he pulled his mustache up towards his eye, and, putting himself into one of his quickest walks, followed his conductress to the door of Suleiman Aga's harem. When they had arrived there, Zabetta soon appeared, and under pretence of having some commission to give to the Tatar, who was to perform it for her at Arzeroum, or Stamboul, she invited him to sit, and, crouching down opposite to each other, they began to converse.

"You are welcome, Sir Aga," said she; "may you live many years!"

"Well found," answered Mustafa.

"Is your humour good?" said Zabetta.

"Good, thank Allah!" answered Mustafa.

"You, what do you do?"

"What can we do? we sit," said Zabetta.

"What news have you?"

"There is nothing," answered Mustafa.

"There is one business, however," said Zabetta, who, having thus much beat about the bush, thought it high time to begin—"there is one business of which you are aware, of which

the old Armenian woman has informed me,—is there not ?”

“ What can I say ?” said Mustafa in some embarrassment, “ there is—how shall it be ?”

“ How can it be, do you ask,” replied the artful woman, “ when you are about setting off immediately ? You can not marry on the full gallop ; such a business requires time : you must delay. You are no ass, Mashallah ! and can put off going as long as you please.”

My *Beyzadeh*—my master,” said Mustafa, “ is like fire when once he determines to set off.”

“ He has not been before the Pasha yet,” said Zabetta ; “ he must go, he cannot start without that ceremony — that will take up time : you must look to that, upon your head be it !”

“ Upon my head be it !” answered Mustafa, “ and, Inshallah ! I will raise delays. But let us speak a little about your daughter.”

“ Go first upon this business : put off your departure—tell lies—say this thing and that thing—say every thing, provided you make

the Beyzadeh stay his departure. Have you understood me?"

Mustafa slowly assented that he had understood; he could not, however, quite make out why, in the arrangement of a marriage, not a word on the subject should have been spoken, and why he, being one of the principal parties concerned, should have been treated as if he had nothing to do with it. He went off consoling himself with the ejaculation "*Ne apalum*—what can I do? *avret der*—it is a woman;" then shaking the lapel of his jacket, he mumbled to himself, "O save me from a woman!"

CHAPTER VII.

Habló el buey, y dixo mú. The ox spoke, and said moo.

CEJUDO, *Refranes Castellanos.*

OSMOND willingly assented to the propriety of Mustafa's proposal of a visit to the Pasha, for he himself was not sorry to frame any excuse which might delay his departure. Accordingly, the etiquette of the visit having been settled, a horse handsomely caparisoned, escorted by two *chokhadars* (literally cloak-bearers), and conducted by a groom, was sent to the gate of the dyer's house, and Osmond was invited to proceed thereupon to the government house. It was a large and unconnected mansion, entered by a pair of folding gates ; an open space or

court extended itself to a considerable distance within, in which several fine horses were seen at their pickets, whilst groups of attendants and persons upon business were collected here and there, some seated with their never-failing pipes in hand, others lounging about, waiting for admission to the presence.

Osmond alighted at the foot of a long flight of stone steps situated on the outside of the chief body of the building, at the summit of which were the hall of audience and the rooms of attendance. Below, on the ground-floor, Osmond remarked a small iron-grated window, through which he saw some imploring faces, and which he discovered gave light to a cell for prisoners. No sooner had he reached the top of the staircase than he was introduced into the Pasha's reception-room, followed closely by Mustafa and Stasso, by way of swelling the number of his retinue.

In the further corner of the ottoman which surrounded the apartment, he perceived a mountain of shawls, furs, and tufted beard,

through which peered a pair of eyes and a nose. He could scarcely make out what it could be until he saw it move, when he ascertained that it contained a man, and that man the Pasha. Opposite to him sat a reverend Turk, of respectable and handsome presence, who he afterwards learned was Suleiman Aga, Ayesha's reputed father; and lower down was squatted a little sour-faced man, dressed like a priest, the Imam of an adjacent mosque. The end of the room was crowded with *chiboukchies* or pipe-men, shoe-bearers, cloak-bearers, and other attendants, among whom also stood Mustafa and Stasso.

As soon as Osmond had taken his seat, which he did on a place pointed out to him, the Pasha said, "*Khosh geldin*—you are welcome!"

"*Khosh bulduk*—well found," answered Osmond, nothing abashed.

After about a minute's pause, during which Suleiman Aga looked neither to the right nor left, and the priest had cast a scrutinising eye over Osmond, the Pasha again opened his lips

and said, “*Kiefiniz ayi me*—is your humour good?”

“Good,” said Osmond, with a severe gravity.

After another long interval, the Pasha said again, “*Khosh geldin;*” to which Osmond said, “I am your servant.”

Upon which, slowly turning up his eyes to his attendants, he said, “*Chibouk, cahveh getir*—bring pipes and coffee,” when several long-robed, handsomely dressed men left the room to perform his bidding, the whole being done without the least noise, and as solemnly as if the party assembled were met at a funeral. In a short time after the same men rushed in, armed with pipes, some six feet in length, and made a direct charge at each of the persons present, placing the amber-mouthed tips in their mouths, and resting the lighted bowls on small round tinned platters on the carpeted floor. Coffee was then served to each, by a servant of superior dress and authority, in small thimble-like cups, which was duly sipped smoking hot.

When the coffee had been disposed of, the voice of the priest was heard in the smoke addressing the Pasha: alluding to Osmond, he said, “*Kim boo*—who is that?”

“This is our friend,” said the Pasha in a good-natured voice; “this is an English *Beyzadeh*, or lord’s son. Is it not so?” said he, turning to Mustafa.

“Yes, O Effendi!” said Mustafa.

“Who are you?” said the priest, turning round to Mustafa.

“I am the Tatar Aga,” answered Mustafa.

“*Hai! hai!*” sighed the priest with a sort of recondite sigh, and then stroking down his face he mumbled his profession of faith, and finished it by ejaculating, “*Shukiur allah!* — praise be to God!” as if he would have said, “Thank heaven I am what I am!”

After another long interval, the Pasha turned to Osmond and inquired, “Have you pipes in your country? have you tobacco?”

“No,” said Osmond; “like these, none; we do not generally smoke.”

Upon which, the Pasha slowly turning him

self towards Suleiman Aga, dropping his features into a look of pity and contempt, said in an under tone, “ *Haivan der*—they are animals !”

Suleiman Aga dropped his features into a similar look, shook his head, and said, “ What is to be done ?”

Several minutes now elapsed, when the Pasha again inquired, “ Have you horses in your country ?”

“ We have horses,” answered Osmond.

“ *Pek ayi*—very well,” said the Pasha.

The *Mir akhor*—the chief of the stable, who was standing among the attendants, a well-dressed man, in a tone of humility said,—“ May the Pasha live many years ! they have horses, but they make them all *beguirs*—geldings, and they cut their tails off, as Allah is great !”

“ Is it so ?” said the Pasha, without the least emotion, although he slowly ejaculated, “ Allah ! Allah !”

Suleiman Aga and the priest also said, “ Allah ! Allah !”

The Pasha again turning his eyes towards

Suleiman Aga, said, “ *Delhi der* — they are madmen !”

“ *Ne apalum*—what can we do ?” said Suleiman Aga in a tone of resignation.

All at once appeared among the crowd of attendants a man of enormous size, a negro, sufficiently meanly dressed, who was the Pasha’s *pehlivan bashi*, or chief wrestler. At the sight of him the Pasha became animated, he sat up, his eye glanced at him with exultation, and looking towards Osmond he said, “ Have you anything like that in your country ?”

“ What can I say ?” answered Osmond ; “ we have great as well as little men in my country.”

“ We shall see !” said the Pasha ; upon which he made a sign to the negro to be gone, and, soon after, he was seen in the court below, stripped to the skin, with the exception of a pair of wrestling-trowsers well greased, awaiting the signal from his master to exhibit his strength as opposed to another wrestler, who stood prepared for the encounter, dressed in a similar costume.

The signal having been made, the negro clapped his hands, and so did his opponent, and then went through the ceremonial common to wrestlers before they set to, which consists in a certain mummary of attitudes and prostrations, accompanied by invocations of "*Bismillah!*"—in the name of Allah." They then tried to grapple, which was difficult, inasmuch as both their bodies were covered with oil, and they slipped away, sometimes on, sometimes off each other, like agitated eels. The negro was indeed a powerful man; his muscles displayed themselves in as strong relief as those of the Farnesian Hercules; but he was slow and sluggish, and could scarcely withstand the more active exertions of his antagonist; at length, however, he managed to seize him under the legs, and having, as the sailors say, got a good purchase, threw him over his head, and laid him prone on his back, which is all that is required, and is the signal of victory. After this feat, all out of breath, he ran to a convenient spot underneath the Pasha's window, exclaiming, "May the Pasha live for ever!" upon which

the delighted chief threw him out a small piece of gold for his pains, and said, “*Mashallah!*—praise be to Allah!” He then ordered one of the servants to call him up into his presence, for he was anxious to exhibit him to Osmond, and he soon after appeared in the very state in which he had wrestled.

Again the Pasha said exultingly, “Have you anything like him in your country?” to which Osmond made a reply complimentary to the powers of the negro, and at the same time conferred upon him a suitable gift, which was very gratifying to the individual, and also went a great way in enlisting his master among his friends.

“*Wallah!*” said the Pasha, turning to Suleiman Aga, “the Ingliz are good men.”

To which Suleiman Aga answered by addressing himself to Osmond, and said these words, “You are a *giaour*—an infidel, are you not?”

“If by *giaour* you mean a disbeliever in the Mussulman’s faith,” said Osmond, “I am; but let me say that I am not more a *giaour*

than you are, since you do not acknowledge the Christian's faith."

The word *giaour*, in a Turk's estimation, is never used except in an offensive sense, and consequently when those present heard an infidel like Osmond apply it in this manner, and to one of the most respected of their community, they appeared to be struck with astonishment and horror.

The Pasha, who was secretly no friend to holy men, and led a life of pleasure and sensuality, having heard what was said, and fearful of more being elicited, immediately called again for pipes and coffee, which served as a signal for the breaking up of the visit. Osmond then arose and took his departure, but the words which he had uttered made Suleiman Aga his enemy, and excited the wrath of the sour priest, who went home more incensed against Christians than ever, and more pleased with himself for being what he was.

After having satisfied the numerous applications for *backshish*—vails, which are usually made by the officers and attendants of a pasha

upon the occasion of a visit such as we have described, Osmond returned home. He felt that he had no longer any excuse for delaying his departure, but still he could not tear himself away from the fascination which was spread over him, like a net, by the charms of Ayesha. He was perplexed how to act in giving his orders to Mustafa, whom he still supposed to be anxious to proceed.

Mustafa, on the other hand, was plotting in his head how he could create further delays, and having on former occasions experienced the difficulty of counteracting his master's wishes when bent upon departure, he sat down perplexed, and, as a Persian would say, inhaled the pipe of thought, and emitted the smoke of uncertainty. After various schemes, which proved the one more abortive than the other, he determined to have recourse to the ingenuity of Zabetta; for he was wise enough to know that men are but babes compared to women, when a bit of deception is to be invented and put into execution. Accordingly, he applied at the gate of Suleiman

Aga's harem, and was soon admitted to an audience.

“What has happened, Sir Tatar?” said Zabetta, as soon as she saw him; “how does our affair advance?”

“What do I know?” answered Mustafa; “we have been to the Pasha—all went off well; but if the Beyzadeh wishes to depart to-morrow morning, what can I say? I am no liar to my master.”

“How is this?” exclaimed Zabetta; “you a man, and no liar! This can never be. Where have you lived all this while? This is the Kurdistan, we are amongst thieves and rogues, this is the very country of lies.”

“What can I do then?” asked Mustafa.

“Do? go tell your Aga that all the post-horses were stolen from the menzil khaneh last night by the Kurds—that occurrence is frequent here; tell him that the Savanlu mountain is impassable on account of Cara Bey's gang; tell him that the Pasha of Arzeroum's troops kill all Franks.—Do you come to me, man, when any child in the street here will help you to half a score of

good lies, better than any which I can invent? Go, tell him that he cannot think of leaving Kars for a week at least."

"*Bakalum*— we shall see!" said Mustafa, thoughtfully shaking his head.

"*Bakalum! bakalum!*" exclaimed the irritable woman with impatience, "you Osmanlis have never any thing else but *Bakalum* at the bottom of your throats, when you ought to be up and acting."

"But, Khadun!" said Mustafa with humility, "when shall we have conversation upon my little affair?"

"Ah, your affair! true," said Zabetta, who had almost forgotten the circumstance of his being a suitor for her daughter, so much was she wrapped up in her own schemes: "leave all to me; Suleiman Aga, my husband, is a difficult man, but, Inshallah! the business will go to your satisfaction. Go, make your Aga delay his departure, and then we will converse; go, you have been welcome."

Upon which Mustafa slowly rose, and as slowly putting one foot before the other, he

began to perform an operation in his mind, which the honesty of his nature seldom encouraged towards his master, whatever he might do towards Turks, that is, the fabrication of a falsehood. In order to this he stopped at a coffee-house by the road-side, the resort of Tatars and travellers, to refresh his invention by a cup of coffee and to soothe his nerves by a fresh pipe. There he met with a friend, a Tatar, just arrived, who was on his road from Constantinople to Persia, who, discussing his journey, informed him, in fact, that he had met with a detachment of Cara Bey's gang, precisely in the defiles of the Savanlu mountain, and that he had escaped from them with the greatest difficulty ; but that the day before they had pillaged a caravan proceeding to Arzeroum, and had killed one Armenian merchant. This intelligence cheered Mustafa's heart, and he exclaimed "Praises be to the Prophet!" to the astonishment of the narrator, as well as several others sitting by, who had opened all their ears to hear the history of his escape.

But Mustafa, in making this ejaculation, as may be conceived, was far from rejoicing in the act of murder which had been related to him ; he only felt relieved inasmuch as he might now boldly face his master without the skreen of a lie, and was sufficiently armed with an excuse for not immediately proceeding on his journey.

Accordingly, having finished his refreshments, and taken leave of his friend, he proceeded to the Armenian dyer's house to seek Lord Osmond. He thought it proper to clothe his face with an appropriate look of sorrow as he entered the room, and squatted himself on the carpet as if he were oppressed with some heavy woe.

“What's the matter, Mustafa?” said Osmond ; “has anything happened ?”

“Bad news, bad news has just arrived,” said Mustafa, shaking his head.

“Has there indeed ?” said Osmond, smiling in his sleeve, for he had studied the characters of Orientals so well that he was always amused

by what their ideas of good or bad news might be. "Has coffee risen in price? or is rice scarce?"

"No," answered Mustafa, sorrowfully; "other miseries are abroad."

"Then perhaps tobacco is scarce; is that it?"

"No, Effendi, no," sighed out the Tatar; "we have plenty of coffee, rice, and tobacco, *Alhemdullilah!*—praises be to Allah! But that head rogue, Cara Bey—I have done the needful to his father and mother—he is now on the Savanlu mountain, and no one can pass. The post-master will not give post-horses, and here we are sitting idle until the fates please to set the road free. Omar Aga, the Tatar, has just arrived, and he left ten Armenian merchants dead on the road. What can we do?"

"That is bad news indeed," said Osmond, seriously; but he would never have allowed himself to be stopped by such a circumstance, knowing, as he did, how much such sort of stories were exaggerated, had he not himself

been inclined to delay his departure. "Cara Bey is a scourge: we must wait a day or two, Mustafa, until we hear that the road is clear—there is no harm in that!—My knee will be quite well by that time; and then, please heaven, whip in hand, we will make up for lost time."

"Inshallah!" said Mustafa, greatly charmed with the success of his scheme, and totally without suspicion how much he had pleased his master by affording him a plausible excuse for remaining where he was.

Osmond felt as if he had received a reprieve from punishment. His passion for Ayesha had made great progress in his breast since his last interview, and he only dreamed of the moment when his eyes might again be blessed with her presence. The more he dwelt upon her image and brought to his recollection the conversations that had passed between them, the more he became convinced that hers had not been the common destiny of every Turkish girl. He felt assured that her story was involved in some mystery; but, whatever that

might be, this he knew, that her nature was so much more refined than that of any other Asiatic whom he had ever seen—her mind so pure, and her intellect so superior, that he felt every inclination, amounting almost to a fixed resolution, to leave nothing untried in order to ascertain the truth, and to place her, if possible, out of the pale of her present degradation. But the more he turned such a scheme over in his mind, the more difficulties seemed to stand in his way. Could he by any means transplant her to Constantinople, there he made no doubt he might easily evade the Turkish authorities, and bear her off to his own country; but from such a place as Kars, “far in the bowels of the land,” unassisted and powerless, a stranger and a Christian withal, he felt it would be next to impossible. He rather clung to the wish of evasion expressed by Zabetta, although it had only been uttered in joke; and he was anxious to hear the same wish repeated, in order that he might discover whether, with her knowledge of the country, aided by wo-

man's ingenuity, she might have devised some practicable mode of effecting it. Accordingly, when the hour for meeting on the terrace came, he proceeded thither, determined to make every investigation in his power, and to ascertain whether it were possible, consistently with prudence and rectitude, to enter into some negotiation which might ultimately draw her from her present situation.

Ayesha met Osmond on this occasion with every appearance of confidence. His words, in their previous conversation, had sunk deep in her mind. She longed to receive further instruction from him, to have her difficulties solved, and to be put into the way of gaining knowledge. Ingenuousness and candour beamed in her countenance as she approached him, whilst the real incentive of her actions, which to this moment had not been revealed to her, that love which creeps so insidiously into the heart, threw an indescribable charm of retiring modesty and bashfulness over her whole person and demeanour. Osmond was more enslaved by her beauty and manner than

he had been at the first interview, but, distrustful of his natural ardour and impetuosity, he determined to check his feelings. He was apprehensive lest the beauty, the grace, and the singleness of heart, of one who was in truth a child of nature, might throw him off his guard, and make him avow sentiments destructive to her peace of mind. Her mother, who was present, scarcely acted as a restraint upon him, for both her words and actions were encouraging; and he probably would at this interview have made a full disclosure of his passion, and given utterance to his feelings, had he not been, perhaps happily been, taken up by Zabetta, who stepped in and engaged him in conversation, with the view of proposing her scheme for escaping from Kars. That artful woman had watched the progress of Osmond's love for her daughter; she saw how much he had been struck by her beauty, and she now thought she had no time to lose in making use of his agency. She accordingly in set terms, preluding what she had to say with those flattering words and abject speeches

so common in the mouths of Greeks, proposed that he should leave Kars, but, instead of proceeding to Constantinople, take the shortest road to the frontiers of Georgia, where he would at once come under the protection of Russia; that he should there wait until she and Ayesha joined him, which she asserted they might easily do, by means which she felt confident they could command. She observed, and truly, that should they attempt to proceed to Constantinople direct, either by Trebizond and the Black Sea, or by the post-road, they would inevitably be overtaken, seized, and probably be delivered over to receive the punishment so severely adjudged on such occasions by the Mahomedan law; and she finished her proposal by saying,—“Once protected by the Moscovs, it will then be time to settle whether you will take us to Constantinople, or proceed to your own country through the different states of Frangistan.”

The boldness of this scheme, apparently so feasible, concerted by a woman, the wife of a Mahomedan, astonished Osmond; for he had

ever been accustomed to look upon Asiatic women as so helpless, and so much creatures of routine, that he could not but esteem Zabetta a miracle of enterprise. Before, however, he gave his consent, he desired time to reflect, for however great might be his love for Ayesha, he felt that he ought not to rush headlong into an adventure which might involve others as well as himself in, perhaps, fatal and inextricable difficulties. He wished, moreover, to ascertain what might be the sentiments of Ayesha herself upon the subject; for in Zabetta he saw an ardent and reckless woman, whose schemes evidently had reference more to herself than to the well-being of her daughter, and whose vehement character, blinding her judgment, might carry her away into the perpetration of violence and of every species of imprudence. But to do this it was necessary that he should speak to Ayesha without the constraint of her mother's presence, whose wishes it was evident she did not allow herself to oppose, and to whose guidance she ever submitted with meekness. He made an effort to engage her in conver-

sation by herself, but Zabetta, whose hopes of emancipation from her present situation had absorbed every other feeling, had so excited both her powers of speech and her imagination, that she did not cease to importune Osmond with her projects and schemes, until the night had so far advanced as to oblige them to retire.

However, before they parted, he found an opportunity to request Ayesha to meet him by herself on the terrace earlier than usual on the following evening; and although she said nothing, it was evident by her manner that she did not reject his proposal. It need not be said, that in this meeting he made no progress in ascertaining the mystery by which she was encompassed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Jul. My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep ; the more I give to thee
The more I have, for both are infinite. (*a noise is heard.*)
I hear some noise within ; dear love, adieu !

Romeo and Juliet.

OSMOND passed the succeeding day in a state of feverish anxiety. He longed for the evening ; he felt as if his future doom was about to be sealed. Ayesha had created in his breast an interest of so intense a nature, that, notwithstanding all his previous resolutions, it overcame every consideration of prudence or expediency. His imagination had taken fire at the mystery in which her history was involved, and he was strengthened in his suspicions that such excellence could never be the offspring of barbarians ; for in her conversation, there beamed through her ignorance a refinement

which belonged only to the highest breeding ; and in her manners she might vie with those of the most polished nations.

The muezzins had not yet called the faithful to evening prayer from the minarets, when Osmond appeared on the terrace in search of Ayesha. There was a balmy stillness in the air : the sun was about to disappear behind the western hills, and the repose of nature was such as happy lovers prize for being in unison with their own feelings. But the lovers who were about to meet were far from enjoying such a state of tranquillity ; doubts, apprehensions, and fears, disturbed their breasts too much to leave them in security, and they were agitated by the tremors of disquietude which will creep into the minds of those who are about to undertake a dangerous and uncertain enterprise. Osmond waited for some time alone ; his eyes in vain sought the object of his desire ; she did not appear, and he began to doubt whether she would ever have the courage so far to overstep the prejudices of her sect as to meet him alone and unprotected. Long sha-

dows began to cast themselves over the scenery which surrounded him ; the sun's lower limb was fast approaching the tips of the mountain behind which it set, and the shades of evening were gradually drawing towards twilight, when he heard a slight rustling behind the wall which stood before the opening of the adjoining terrace. To his delight he perceived the graceful form of Ayesha approaching him with a slow and uncertain step, her heart impelling her onward to her lover, whilst her Mahomedan fears shackled her motions with more than the weight of fetters on the feet of a prisoner. He flew to receive her with an eagerness that almost alarmed her ; but when she heard his soothing voice, and was quieted by the respectful tone of his manner, she was restored to all the confidence with which he had inspired her, and, in the pleasure of being at his side, forgot the dangers which impended over their heads.

“ This is really kind,” said Osmond, as he took her hand into his ; “ how can I show you my gratitude for thus trusting in me ? ”

“Allah only knows,” said Ayesha, timidly withdrawing her hand, “whether what I am now doing be right. My heart tells me you are good, and that I should be wicked to doubt you ;—but pity me ! I have been taught to think you are one of those whom a Mussulman must in duty reject. Oh, what shall I do ?”

“Ayesha,” said Osmond, “the day will come when you will more clearly see the errors in which you have been brought up. I appeal to your own heart, whether the God whom we both worship, by whom we have both been fashioned, and in whom we both live—whether the works of his hands be objects of pollution such as Mahomedans esteem Christians to be ?”

“I cannot think,” said Ayesha, “that there can be pollution in anything you tell me. I feel myself better and happier since I have put into practice what you advised me to do. But when you are gone, who will direct me ? must I live without a law ?”

“But what if we were never to be sepa-

rated?" said Osmond, with a tone of the deepest feeling, whilst he fixed his expressive eyes upon her.

"How can that ever be?" exclaimed Ayesha, her face beaming with sudden animation. "Who am I that could venture to hope for so much happiness? Will you become a true believer, and abandon all for me? No; that can never be: do not play with my feelings."

"Ayesha," said Osmond with emotion, "let me not deceive you. I should be unworthy of you if I ever could abandon my faith. You say truly—No; that can never be. But if you trust me in one thing, trust me in all. If you believe that I love you, believe too that I would never urge you to wrong:—I do love, I adore you. You are as necessary to my happiness as the air I breathe. Say, too, that you love me, that you will be mine, and then we will live for each other through life until death, through good and evil, and, as we shall be of one mind and one heart, so we will partake of each other's fortunes, and belong to one country. You must follow me whither I will lead

you;—trust in me. As God is in heaven, as I am a true man, trust in my word and my honour, and I swear to live only to make you happy.”

This passionate avowal, which was spoken with an honesty of purpose that brought on involuntary conviction, made Ayesha’s bosom heave with the agitation of a thousand contending feelings, whilst her cheeks burned with blushes. She could not utter a word ; her heart was full to suffocation. She would have sheltered herself under the protection of some tender parent in whom she could confide, had she not felt that Osmond was superior to every being whom she had ever known, and that his protection and his love was of more worth to her than all the world besides.

“ Speak ! speak ! ” said Osmond, with increasing tenderness ; “ let me hear one word of love from your lips ; let me know that I am not indifferent to you.”

“ Allah knows how much I love you,” said the drooping girl, and she would have sunk to the ground in making the avowal, had she not been sustained by her lover, who bent over

her with the ecstasy of one who had received a new existence. As they stood thus in silent rapture, their minds heedless of anything but the possession of each other's secret, the eyes of Osmond casually fell upon a necklace which hung at the neck of Ayesha. It was composed of many gold coins, such as are frequently worn in the East, in the centre of which was suspended a sort of locket curiously wrought in gold, upon which, strange to say, he discovered engraved a coat of arms; the whole evidently of English workmanship. On looking more closely at the necklace, he found that it was principally composed of English gold coins, mixed up and strung with sequins and ducats, the common gold coin in circulation throughout Turkey. At the sight of this object, the current of his emotions received a new impulse, and all at once, as if seized by sudden madness, he took it into his hand, inspected it with wild astonishment, and exclaimed,—“Ayesha, in the name of Allah! what is this? How came you by this?”

The bewildered maiden, who but the mo-

ment before was on the point of dissolving into tears of joy, or fainting with excess of agitation, was struck with fear at his strange action, and, shrinking from him, answered, “Why do you ask? My mother gave it to me; is it sinful to possess it?”

“Sinful, my Ayesha—no!” exclaimed Osmond, still gazing at the locket, and endeavouring to make out the coat of arms; “but, as I live, this came from my country; this has once belonged to my nation; how came your mother to possess it?”

“I know not indeed,” said Ayesha; “I have worn it ever since I was a child, and was told it was to preserve me from the evil eye: more I cannot say. But why are you so astonished?”

“My life!” exclaimed Osmond, “how can I be otherwise than astonished? There is mystery in this. Are you indeed a Turkish maiden? Are you Suleiman Aga’s daughter? Zabetta’s daughter?—it cannot be: reflect a while. Have you never heard more of this trinket, or of these coins? they are from my

country. Ayesha, you must belong to us. You have been born a Christian ; you cannot have been born a Mahomedan."

Ayesha's feelings received a new turn as she heard this from her lover. She knew not what to say ; her head became confused : she felt as if her whole existence was identified with Osmond's, and that those whom she had ever looked upon as her father and mother, were no longer such. The words of Zabetta, ' You are not born a child of Islam,' which had been engraved on her mind ever since they had been uttered, now flashed across her thoughts, and she was on the point of communicating them to her lover when she recollected the solemn injunction which she had received not to disclose them, and, making an effort, she suppressed any allusion to their meaning, and merely satisfied herself by saying — " I once heard that my mother had brought these things from Athens. I think I have heard that they belonged to Christians."

Osmond's imagination was fired at this discovery, and although he could not make out

to what family the coat of arms on the locket belonged, yet there was enough to establish the fact, that Ayesha or Zabetta were in some manner or other identified with English people. It is true, the trinket might have been purchased, and the English gold have found its way into the currency of Turkey ; but it was not likely so to be, since the one never could have been an article of trade, and had evidently belonged to a person of some consequence, and the others were unknown among the bankers and merchants of the country as a coin in use. But how could he discover any trace of the person to whom those things belonged except through Zabetta ? and she evidently had no inclination to give any account of herself or of her daughter, for, as we have seen, she always avoided returning answers to the many questions which both Osmond and his servant had put to her. However, he was so much elated by this discovery, that all the hopes, and schemes and expectations, of making Ayesha his own, which had so constantly occupied his thoughts,

now appeared to him upon the point of being realized. His scruples, if he had any, of drawing her from her parents, so called, were now at rest ; his resolutions of exerting himself to release her from her present situation were strengthened, and he gave way to his feelings, heedless of the consequences, and almost forgetful of the difficulties which stood in his way.

The lovers had been so much wrapped up in each other, that they had not noticed the call to evening prayer that was now chanting from most of the minarets in the city. There was a mosque situated at a small distance from Suleiman Aga's house : the minaret attached to it arose in a conspicuous manner on the side of the terrace upon which Osmond and Ayesha were standing. Presently the well-known chant of *La illaha illallah!* rang through the air from its circular gallery ; still they heeded it not. When the Imam or priest who was chanting it, with his hand behind his ear, giving to its wild cadence the whole force of his lungs, came round to the side of Suleiman Aga's house, all of a sudden, with the half-

finished verse of *Allahu Akbar* on his lips, he stopped, for his eye was arrested by the sight of the lovers, whose attitudes of confiding endearment told him at once the object of their interview, and awoke in his breast all his Mahomedan jealousy. He watched them earnestly for a while, stroked down his face, ejaculated within himself, *There is but one Allah!* and straight went on again with his chant. The sudden outbreak of the priest's voice, to which was added a more than usual violence, mixed with no little acrimony, startled both Osmond and Ayesha, who, looking up, at once discovered the priest, and then the danger of their situation as quickly flashed across their minds. The frightened Ayesha timidly exclaimed, "*Allah! Allah! let me go—we are seen,*" and with precipitation covered herself entirely with her veil. Osmond, who perhaps did not feel the full extent of their danger, would have detained her, but she was too much scared, and knew too well how fatal might be the consequences to him, whatever they might be to herself, should he be con-

victed of communicating with a Mussulman's harem. "God protect thee!" exclaimed Ayesha, as she cast a tender look at her lover, and with precipitation retreated into her own house. Osmond, after looking about him for some time, his mind absorbed in thought, and a vague apprehension of what might be the consequences of this incident passing through it, slowly retreated also, and descended to his own apartment.

It so happened that the Imam of the minaret was the identical sour-looking priest whom Osmond had met at the Pasha's during his visit there. This true son of the faith, a most bigoted and unrelenting champion of Islam, had recognised Osmond at once by his dress and appearance to be the Giaour whom he had met at the Pasha's. The words of his evening call had almost stuck in his throat after he had remarked the lovers, so quick and sudden was the anger which arose in his breast. "Curses be on the Christian dog!" he exclaimed, and he spat upon the ground as he said this, whilst he slowly groped his way down the winding steps of his minaret.

“See,” said he, “what pollution these unclean beasts have brought into our city. If Suleiman Aga does not defile that infidel’s father and mother, by the soul of the Prophet I will.” Upon which, exploding with exclamations of rage, of jealousy, of hatred at Christians in general, and at Osmond in particular, he bent his steps towards Suleiman’s house.

He found that personage quietly smoking his pipe and looking out of the window, having just refreshed himself by his evening’s prayers and lustration. He was in the most placid of moods. The Imam scarcely allowed himself time to say his “Peace be with you, and may your evening be prosperous!” ere he broke out into the following form of words:—

“Suleiman Aga! here you sit, Mashallah! as if there was nothing else in the world except you and your pipe. You live without news of what is going on, Suleiman Aga.”

“What can I do?” said the placid Turk: “I sit.”

“You are not a fool, you, Mashallah! your beard has grown white; you are a man, and in

fine a Mussulman, and here you sit without news, Suleiman Aga."

"That's true," quietly responded the phlegmatic man.

"*La illaha illallah!*" exclaimed the priest; "you are much—you——! Shall I say then what with these two eyes I have seen, and with this one head I have understood?"

"Speak, let us see," said Suleiman Aga.

"By your head! by Omar! by the blessed Prophet! I have seen one of your house in company with the Frank infidel who lives at Bogos the dyer's."

"What do you say, man?" exclaimed Suleiman Aga, taking the pipe from his lips, and roused up into unusual animation. "Do you lie, or speak the truth?"

"By that beard of yours!" answered the priest, "I speak the truth."

"Who was the woman?" inquired Suleiman, with increasing anxiety.

"What can I say? who can tell one woman from another under the veil? All I positively know is, that the Frank Giaour was the man."

“ So, is it ?” said Suleiman after some cogitation : “ together you saw them ?”

“ Yes,” answered the other, “ and it is plain they love each other. Why should I keep the truth from you ?”

“ How and where did you see them ?” said Suleiman, his agitation and perplexity increasing as he spoke.

“ I was chanting the Azan at the usual time,” replied the Imam ; “ I had half gone through it, when, from the minaret which looks upon your terrace, I saw a woman with a man. Curses be on all infidels ! May heaven pour misfortunes on their heads !—The man was the Giaour we saw at the Pasha’s the other day—of that I will take my oath upon the blessed Koran. The woman, Allah best knows who it was ! I have said it, what more can I do ?”

Suleiman Aga during this speech was gradually expanding into rage ; his naturally placid face became sullen, and occasionally flashed with looks of revenge ; low-spoken sentences broke from his lips, he cursed in whispers, he clenched his hands, put them by turns

on the head of his dagger, and his whole appearance might be compared to a pent-up volcano. He said nothing more to his informer, but seemed to be nailed to the spot upon which he sat, as if he were there ready to receive the announcement of any more misfortunes which might be preparing for him. A long silence ensued, when the priest said in a low voice, “Suleiman Aga, what shall we do?”

The only answer he got was, “I will send ruin to his father and mother,” whilst his eyes looked upon vacant space, and his head remained fixed in one position.

“Speak, O man!” continued the priest: “what is to be done?”

“*Pezevenk!* — rogue! wretch!” softly breathed the jealous Turk.

“*Ai Gardach,*—brother, are you turned mad? — speak!” said the Imam louder than before.

“*Kiupek!*—*Giaour!*—dog! infidel!” whispered the other.

At length all of a sudden, as if he had been bitten by a snake, he bounded off the sofa upon which he sat, and without looking either to the

right or left, flung out of the room, leaving the man of the minaret in utter amazement at this unexampled feat. All he could say was, "He is mad !" then straightway quitting the house he proceeded to the Mufti, open-mouthed, with the intelligence.

The wretched Suleiman had sprung through the corridors in his way to the women's apartments, when he discovered that he had left his slippers behind him : this little circumstance most providentially broke the violence of his determination. A Turk never loses sight of his dignity ; seeing his feet without their papouches, he slowly turned back to seek them, and by the time he had put them on, his mind had in some measure turned also. First, he released the head of his dagger from his fast-clenched hand ; then the fury of his wife's temper came to his thoughts, and acted as a check upon his own ; and last of all, the charms of the unoffending Ayesha became present to his imagination, and very materially put to the rout that host of satanic impulses which were goading him on to crime and bloodshed.

With less precipitation and more uncertainty of purpose, he now proceeded to the harem. Raising the heavy curtain which hung over the door, the first objects he perceived were his wife and Ayesha talking together with great earnestness. Upon seeing him they retreated into the room before described, whither he followed them. In a manner totally unusual to him and never before witnessed by his wife, he said,—“ Woman ! stand up and speak for yourself ; you are a sinner, and if a sinner, God protect you ! ”

“ What do you say, Suleiman Aga ? ” exclaimed Zabetta ; “ are you run out of your senses ? I a sinner indeed ? What abomination are you eating ? If I am a sinner, what are you ? ”

“ This is no child’s play, woman ! ” said the angry man ; “ tell me, as you value your life, as you value that child whom you see there, what devilry has got into your head, that you should leave your husband and seek infidels for your company ? ”

Zabetta was not quite prepared for this, and

as guilt is ever a coward, her usual prowess in an encounter with her husband forsook her, and she turned pale. "I do not understand you," said she: "you are not a man if you come here with a lie in your mouth to oppress a woman."

"A lie, do you say?" exclaimed Suleiman; "men do not dream when with their eyes wide open they see a Mussulman woman and an infidel together: that has been seen this very evening; you are that woman, the Giaour at the next door is the man, do you call that a lie?"

"*Bè hày*—what's this?" exclaimed Zabetta, regaining her assurance. "A lie! I do call it a lie; whoever said it, is as great an oaf as you are, and that's much. Why do you bring your beard here to be laughed at? Go to the ass that sent you here, and tell him 'I send him a bigger ass back in return.'"

"Woman!" said Suleiman sternly, his wrath rising with her impertinence, "your words are of no avail against proof. You have been seen this very evening before the Azan in company with the Frank infidel: tell me plainly what happened, or, by Allah! the

consequences will be fatal to you. Suleiman is not easily excited, but when he is, let me tell you, it is time to place your trust in God—speak !”

Zabetta, seeing that the subject was too grave to be treated lightly, did not answer this question otherwise than by calling out to the black slave. “Nourzadeh,” said she, “come hither; say where have I been all this evening until the Azan?” The girl’s face, bearing marks of recent tears, and not in the least aware of the importance of the question, answered—“You were asleep the first part, you were flogging me the next, and then you said your prayers. What more can I say?”

“There,” said the wife, turning round with exultation towards her husband, “tell me after this that I was on the terrace with an infidel. *Haif’! haif’!*—shame! shame!”

So fully was Suleiman impressed with the certainty that it was his wife who had been seen with Osmond, that nothing which she could say could destroy it. Like an enraged ox in a pen, when he is baulked in breaking it

down in one place, rushes headlong at another, so did the angry man persist in accusing his wife. All this while, Ayesha, who was witness to the whole scene, sat almost motionless with fear. She was frequently on the point of delivering herself up to her father's fury, and confessing that she alone was to blame, but she was checked by the apprehension of bringing on the destruction of her lover. The perplexing contest between duty and love threw her into such a state of feverish excitement, that at length, seeing that Suleiman's anger was not in the least abated, but rather increased by Zabetta's conduct and explanation, and fearing that he might break out into some act of unrestrained violence, she summoned up all her courage, and determined that, if the quarrel did not cease, she would make herself the victim, and throw herself upon her father's mercy.

“Zabetta, this is too much,” roared out the furious man, overpowered by his feelings and her opposition. “After all, I am a Mus-sulman—the law protects me—if you have

betrayed me, and sought an infidel lover, you must suffer for it!" Rising from his seat, his hand on his dagger, he proceeded towards her—he would have seized her by the hair—his hand was uplifted—the wretched woman shrieked, when Ayesha threw herself forward between them—" *Amān! amān!*—pity! pity!" she cried out with a voice of supplication; "If you want blood, take mine! I alone am guilty! She is innocent! I met the Frank!"

Upon hearing these words, and seeing the attitude of his daughter, the violence of the enraged Turk all at once subsided: he turned away with a slow and sorrowful action, and to his previous vigour succeeded such a prostration of strength that a child might have mastered him.

"Ayesha," said he, "what have you done?"

"Done!" said Zabetta, whose spirit rose with her triumph,—“Can you talk thus to an innocent child? Go—you have been struck by the evil eye of that unsainted Imam, who, for our misfortune, has come here in a perverse hour, and who watches over your house

as a bird of prey does over a sheepcot. Curses be on his white face and deluding eye ! What harm can a child do ?”

“ She is a child and knows no better,” said Suleiman in a low voice, happy to skreen his beloved Ayesha from farther imputation—
“ that is true—I have been in fault !”

“ To be sure you have !” screamed Zabetta, with the accent of victory : “ And pray when are you ever right ? *Mashallah* !—Praise be to Allah ! You see an Imam, you come here, you tell me I lie, you would kill me, and then you say you are in fault. *Béhèy* !—fine indeed ! And after this you are called the wise Suleiman ! You are an ayan of the city too, —an elder ! one who can judge between right and wrong ! *Pouff ! pouff !*” throwing her five fingers opened into his face, “ I laugh at such wisdom. And then your daughter, a child scarcely out of swaddling-clothes, she is to be called a woman, forsooth ! and then, because an Imam, like an owl peeping out of his hole, tells you he has seen her speaking to a crazy infidel, you are to kill your wife !”

“ *Amān ! amān !*—pity ! pity !” roared out Suleiman Aga in his turn ; “ hold your peace. What can I say more ?”

“ Peace indeed ! No, you shall never have peace again,” said Zabetta, “ as long as I live, — never shall you hear the end of this ! I am not to be killed for nothing ; I will slay in my turn, after the fashion of women. I am a true woman ; nobody shall say nay to that. If I can’t brandish a dagger, I can wield my tongue ; and so I will, and so you shall learn to your cost. I’ll talk from this time to the day of judgment, and stop me who can,—not a cow like you !”

“ *Amān ! amān !*” again exclaimed Suleiman, who, seeing how matters were going with him, made one decided plunge at the door, darted away, and regained his own part of the house, shaking the collar of his robe, and exclaiming “ *Amān ! amān !*”

CHAPTER IX.

Brabantio above at a window.

What is the reason of this terrible summons ?

What is the matter there ?

Othello.

THE day had scarcely begun to dawn, on the morning after the scene which has been recorded in the last chapter, when the inmates of the house of Bogos, the Armenian dyer, were awakened by certain hard knocks at the door given by means of a heavy stick, which resounded not only throughout the house, but also along the narrow and then deserted street.

The Armenian, who was still in bed with his wife and children, heard this noise with alarm, for, by experience, he was aware that it portended evil (either exactions of the government, or perhaps personal violence). He arose in haste,

and before he ventured to open his door, thrust his head through a small latticed window, and looked below into the street. There, to his dismay, he perceived two well-dressed Turks, officers of the Pasha, with their long canes of office in hand, accompanied by a small band of armed men.

“What is there? What has happened?” he inquired in a voice which betrayed at once his fear and respect.

“*Atch, bakallum*—open, let us see!” said one of the officers in a tone of authority.

“What means this *taka tooka*?” (for so this sort of noise is called in Turkish) said the Armenian’s wife, who had thrust her head out of another window.

“*Atch, pezevenk*—open, wretch!” again was said in the same tone, whilst the blows on the door were repeated with redoubled violence.

Upon this Mustafa, the Tatar, who was sleeping in another room, also groped his way out of his warm bed, and muttering appropriate curses upon those who were the causes of the disturbance, put his head out of a third

window, and looking downwards said, “*Ay gardash* — softly, brother! — what do you want? The sun is not risen, and you are run mad already—how is this?”

The officer seeing it was a Mussulman who addressed him this time, varied his speech on the third summons by saying, “*Atch, adam*—open, O man! Our lord the Pasha has sent us —Open!” and then continued such a volley of blows as would have awakened the dead.

Stasso next, who slept in a closet near his master, hearing the commotion, ran to the terrace top, for there was no window in his room, and looking over the parapet exclaimed, “*Ti diavolo!*—what the deuce!” as he rubbed his eyes and looked at the posse in the street; and then, struck with alarm that some danger threatened his master, he hastened to Lord Osmond, and informed him of the circumstance.

Osmond, who was not slow in his conjectures upon what might be the real cause of this visit, communicated the same to his servant, and then dressing himself in haste, with great presence of mind, and in foresight of future

contingencies, secreted about his own person, and that of Stasso, as many articles as he imagined might be of use to him (among others a pair of pocket-pistols, which he concealed in his breast), hid others in the by-corners of the apartment, and thus awaited the event.

Bogos by this time, with fear and trembling, had opened the door of his house to the Pasha's officers. The first salutation which he received was a blow over the head for having detained them so long, and then he heard the question, "Where is the Frank infidel who lives here?"

"*Effendi*—Sir," said the poor man, slow in betraying his guest, yet secretly charmed that the visit was not intended for himself—"he sleeps up-stairs. But what is there at your service?—be pleased to sit:" at the same time he roared out to his wife to bring coffee and pipes. "You have done me honour; my house is exalted by your presence."

The Turks, who can never withstand the temptation of a cup of coffee, on this occasion proved themselves true men; and the two

chokhadars, heedless of their commission, sat themselves down on the Armenian's cushions, awaiting the promised treat, thus giving time to the whole household to secrete such things as were likely to be seized if seen by their visitors, and which on such occasions they felt themselves justified in doing. The guard remained stationed at the street-door.

Mustafa, who had the sharpest nose for the smell of coffee of any one of the sons of Islam, no sooner heard the well-known sound of the mortar in which the roasted bean was braying than he dressed himself in all haste, and making the wonted *Selam aleikum* to the unexpected guests, sat himself down in all dignity by their side, and, lighting his first morning's pipe (ever a great luxury to the true smoker), awaited the coming stimulant with as much unconcern as if that was the first object of consideration, whilst the reason of their visit was apparently quite of secondary importance.

They all sipped in solemn silence, after the coffee had been handed about by the obsequious

Bogos, and smoked between whiles. When it was over, Mustafa duly said, "*Affiet ollali*—much good may it do you!" to which the others responded the same, and stroked their whiskers.

After a long interval, in which nothing was said, and little else done than inhaling and emitting smoke, Mustafa bethought himself that it might be as well if he inquired the object of this their early intrusion, so far as it concerned his master.

"Sir," said the head officer with gravity, "I am the head chokhadar of the Pasha, I am come to invite the Frank to take himself to the Pasha's presence."

"I," said the other officer, "I am the deputy chokhadar, I am come to help to invite the Frank to come to the Pasha."

"*Pek ayi*—very well," said Mustafa, "upon our heads be it: *Yavash, yavash*,—slowly, slow, we will proceed. The Beyzadeh at present sleeps; when he wakes, upon our heads be it, we will go." This, Mustafa said in the full persuasion that these persons were sent on

the part of the Pasha to do his master honour, for he was not in the least aware that anything had occurred which could give rise to a different treatment.

The officers, who had an eye to an immediate *backshish* or present, and who had also calculated how much the reversion of future donations or extortions might be worth to them, appeared to agree with Mustafa in taking a conciliatory view of the case; and although the chief, who was also the spokesman, said "Very well," and "by and by," and "slowly slow," at first; yet, as the day began to show forth, he gradually threw haste into the composition of his speeches, and said "*Haidé, chabouk, gidelim!* — Come along, quick, let us go!" until Mustafa was obliged to proceed to his master, and to inform him of the Pasha's message, and of his wish to see him without loss of time. However, before he went, he thought it right to inquire what might be the real object of the Pasha's wish to see Lord Osmond, since the armed men and the violence of the intrusion produced a doubt

in his mind whether it might be honour, or the contrary, which was in preparation.

“ *Bak!*—see!” said he to the officer, in a mysterious whisper: “is there any thing wrong?” at the same time winking his eye and shaking his head.

“What do I know?” said the other as mysteriously: then putting his two forefingers together in a parallel line, he said, “The Frank has been seen with a woman.”

“Is it so?” said Mustafa, in astonishment; “that is bad,” shaking his head at the same time.

“Truly it is bad,” answered the officer; “our Mufti is much of a devil, and visits a *zamparalik*—a piece of scandal, with great severity; but, if you will put the affair into my hands, I can do many things.”

Mustafa, who easily understood the hint, and who had taken fright at this disclosure, was not backward in putting a gold piece into the hand of his informer, as a retainer for his good offices. He then, with an accelerated step, sought his master, cogitating how the

circumstance might have happened, and full of anger at his master's imprudence.

When he entered the room, without waiting to sit, he exclaimed, "Allah ! Allah ! what have you done ? You do not know these men ! They are bad men ; this is not your country ; these are Mussulmans ! If you speak to a Mussulman girl, they will kill you without mercy ! Why then did you speak ?"

"What has happened, Mustafa," said Osmond, coolly ; "it is very early to be disturbed in this manner."

"What signifies early, what signifies late ? Here are chokhadars with long sticks, here are rogues with swords and pistols, come from the Pasha to seek you, because you have talked with a Mussulman woman. What for did you talk ? This is not like your country ; if you even look through a hole at a woman, they will thrust your eye out : — this is very bad."

"What is to be done, Mustafa ?" said Osmond ; "Women are made to be talked to. I am sorry to have displeased the Turks ; but

there can be no offence where none was intended."

"Allah ! offence !" said Mustafa ; " offence or no offence, these fellows kill Franks without fear, and say ' thanks to God ! ' when they have done so. Something must be done, or else ashes will fall upon our heads."

" I am ready to do what is right," said Osmond.

" Then you must tell lies," answered Mustafa : " with lies and money we may escape ; if not, there is nothing between us and the stick — The stick, do I say ! — Allah ! Allah ! what is there to prevent the sword from striking our necks ?"

" I will tell no lies to please any one, not even the Sultan himself," said Osmond, " much less to please the Pasha. I am an Englishman ; let him hurt an Englishman at his peril."

" *Eh vah !*" exclaimed the Tatar in amazement, " Englishman indeed ! what do these fellows know about Englishmen ? They can't tell one Frank from another ; all are Giaours in their sight. They know Kurds, Franks,

Moscoves—these they know; but all they have ever heard of the Ingliz is, that they make watches, and penknives, and cloth. You must lie,—not a little,—but you must lie much. Say you never saw the woman; give money to the Pasha; mount your horse, and run away:—that is all that you can do.”

“We will see what is to be done,” said Osmond coolly, “when we have visited the Pasha. Let us go; I am ready.”

Mustafa looked up at Stasso, who was standing by, and sorrowfully shook his head, as much as to say,—“We, who know what Turks are, know the misfortune which this event is likely to bring upon our heads; but he is ignorant and cannot see his danger.”

Osmond, accompanied by Mustafa and Stasso, met the chokhadars at the door of the dyer’s house, and straightway they proceeded in a body to the Pasha’s residence. He was treated with sufficient civility by the officers, in consequence of the present already given, and in expectation of what was to come; but when he entered the great court of the mansion,

he found the attendants there, taking their cue from their chief, evidently disposed to be insolent. Among others he observed the negro wrestler, who by his size towered above the rest, and was swinging himself to and fro with every appearance of arrogance and exultation in his superior strength. The Pasha was seated in a *kiosk*, or pleasure-house, situated in an adjoining garden, near an open window, from which he could perceive all that passed, and observed the arrival of Osmond and his attendants. Osmond also perceived him: he walked on without dismay, although there was quite enough to dishearten one less brave, surrounded as he was by barbarians, bigots in religion, plunderers and assassins almost by profession, and far away from protection of any kind, excepting that which he might derive from his own personal character. He was as dauntless as he was self-possessed; but he felt that, unless events favoured him, it would not be easy to extricate himself from the present difficulty, in which his personal safety was so alarmingly involved.

At the time of Osmond's appearance, there were three other persons seated with the Pasha: the Mufti, the Imam who had seen the act for which he was summoned, and Suleiman Aga. When Osmond had sufficiently approached the kiosk to be within speaking-distance, he perceived the Pasha making a sign to one in the crowd, and presently the negro, his chief wrestler, made his way towards him, with a swagger of insolence, and an air as if he would say, I will try what you are made of. The crowd, who were accustomed to such exhibitions, made way for him, and allowed him to approach his intended victim. Osmond, seeing that some violence was preparing against him, put himself upon the defensive and as he had ever been celebrated for his prowess and dexterity in all kinds of exercises, particularly in every thing that related to attack and defence, he felt that, so long as no weapons but those which nature had given to man were directed against him, he was a match for any Turk, however great might be his size or strength. The negro still advan-

cing upon him, Osmond exclaimed with a commanding voice, and in a threatening attitude, "What do you want, wretch? stand off!" The negro, receiving a nod of encouragement from the Pasha, would have seized Osmond under the legs with a view of throwing him down, when he received a blow, such only as a skilful and practised boxer knows how to bestow, that felled the monster to the ground with a power which seemed the work of magic. It was driven so instantaneously that the action was scarcely perceived, and the astonishment which it created in the bystanders was proportionably great. "Allah ! Allah !" issued from almost every turbaned head ; every one retreated from Osmond as if he were something supernatural. Nobody could conceive that one small hand simply protruded in a straight line, could produce the effect of casting down a mass of flesh and blood so large and disproportionate as the pehlivan bashi's. As for the Pasha, he, as an amateur of every sort of violence, was entranced with pleasure at this spectacle, and, instead of regarding Osmond with any ill-will for the ex-

hibition of his prowess, his estimation of him rose on the contrary a thousand per cent., and *Mashallah!* and *Aferin!* broke from his lips with unceasing vociferation.

The ponderous negro rose from his fall completely cowed, and evinced no disposition to renew the contest. He looked upon his antagonist with a mixture of fear and surprise, and his feelings were participated by every one present; and thus Osmond, who had at first been despised and derided, now stood forward in their estimation as a creature of a peculiar species, as one whom nobody could venture to molest with impunity.

Osmond after this went into the kiosk. The Pasha, who had almost forgotten the reason of his appearance, eyed him with looks of complacency, scrutinized his person with the knowledge of a connoisseur in wrestlers, and was considering in his mind how he might best secure in his service one who had proved himself superior to any pehlivan he had ever known. To conquer his own negro, the pride of Asia Minor, who had never been yet thrown on his back

by man, and whose feats of strength were as celebrated in Turkey as those of Rustam were in Persia, was in his eyes a feat of such importance, that he paid him the same sort of homage, to use the language of the North, which the 'fancy' are apt to pay to the 'champion.' He invited him to sit near him, gave him the proper refreshments, and flattered him with unusual compliments. The Mufti, however, did not view Osmond in the same light. This personage was a severe and ominous-looking man of the law. His features were stern, his eye keen, and his beard scanty. He never relaxed into compassion, excepting under the pressure of temptation, and that temptation his nature had long determined to be gold and silver. Instead of scanning his person as his compeer had done, he speculated what might be the dimensions of his purse. He surveyed him as the tiger does the hind before he springs, and, with all the virulence of a bigoted Mus-sulman, he felt much satisfaction at having secured a Christian within his toils. Suleiman Aga's naturally impassive face became ani-

mated with an angry expression, as he looked upon the cause of the confusion which had taken place in his house; and the Imam felt that he was elevated into a man of consequence, by having been the means of bringing an offender to justice.

After Osmond had been seated a short time, Mustafa and Stasso standing at the end of the room, the Mufti addressed himself to Mustafa, and having ascertained that he was an Osmanli and Osmond's attendant, inquired whether he understood Turkish, to which Mustafa answered in the affirmative. The Mufti then turning to Osmond, without making use of any of those common-place phrases of welcome and compliment so usual among Orientals, said,—

“What is your name?”

“My name is Osmond, at your service.”

“Osman?” said the Turk, in an inquiring tone, “how can that be?—you a Frank, and called Osman, that can never be.”

“My name is Osmond,” he answered: “what more can I say?”

“Allah!” said the Mufti, “either your name

is Osman, and you are a true believer, or it is not Osman, and you are a Giaour?"

"I am neither a Mahomedan nor a Giaour," said Osmond; "notwithstanding that, my name is Osmond."

Turning round to the Pasha and to the other Turks present, he coolly said, "He lies." He then continued to Osmond,

"If you are a Frank, wherefore do you wear our clothes? wherefore that unpermitted turban on your head? wherefore those yellow slippers? We are not to be cheated, Mashallah! we have wit in our brain, and eyes in our head."

"I do not deny that you have wit in your brain, and eyes in your head," answered Osmond; "I do wear a turban, I do wear yellow slippers, and still I am a Frank. If you were to go into my country, and chose to wear a hat and a pair of black boots, nobody would object to that."

The Pasha could not forbear laughing in his sleeve at Osmond's answer. Suleiman Aga, who had not forgotten that he had been called

a Giaour, put on an angry countenance, the Imam looked full of malice, and the Mufti became furious.

“ Man !” said the latter, “ we have not sent for you that you should make play under our beards. We are Mussulmans ; this is a Mussulman country. Whoever comes here is subject to its laws. You have seen and spoken to one of our women ; deny that if you can !”

“ I have,” said Osmond boldly — “ I have both seen and spoken to one of your women. If you were in my country, you might see and speak to all our women and welcome. What more can I say ?”

“ Allah ! Allah !” exclaimed the Mufti, “ what more need be said ?”

“ What more ?” exclaimed the Imam : “ this infidel is worthy of death. Is he to come into our city, and laugh at our mothers and daughters ? Suleiman Aga, what do you say to this ?” said he, addressing that personage ; “ this can never be !”

Suleiman Aga stroked his beard, and said, “ This man is a misfortune. By the prophet !

we are not men, if we allow our religion, our laws, and our harems, to be insulted by an infidel. It is not possible that a maiden so timid, and so true to her belief, can have been induced to break through her faith without some potent spell! O Mufti! to you we look for justice; to you," addressing himself to the Pasha—"to you, our Aga and chief, we look for protection."

These words, spoken with an earnestness and an animation uncommon to him, produced considerable sensation upon the assembly. The Pasha was aware how much it behoved him to second the decisions of the Mufti, who, in fact, possessed the principal share of power in the city; and felt that he could not openly oppose himself to the wishes of Suleiman Aga, who, from the respectability of his character and his wealth, had acquired considerable influence. He therefore was obliged to assent to whatever sentence might be pronounced against his prisoner, and he was about ordering him into confinement, when Osmond, who had perceived how ill matters were going with him, deemed

it high time to do his utmost to protect himself. Therefore, addressing himself to the Pasha, he spoke as follows:—

“ You have power in your hands to act towards me as you please. You have already insulted me; you may detain my person, you may perhaps offer me violence, and there is nothing to hinder you from putting me to death. But I warn you that you cannot do this with impunity. I am the subject of a King who has the power to demand satisfaction, not only from your Sultan, but from the most powerful of states; and I shall not die unavenged. Upon your heads the blow will ultimately fall. It will be at your peril if you touch a hair of my head. I am an Englishman; and although the power of England may not be known here, and although, barbarians as you are, you may infringe every law of that hospitality which you profess to exercise towards the stranger, yet your ignorance will not protect you. The arm of justice will overtake you; for whatever act of cruelty you inflict upon me, will, sooner or later, be visited upon each of

your heads." Upon which, taking from his breast the firman which he had received from the Sultan on his departure from Constantinople, in which all pashas, governors, and men in authority, were enjoined to protect and help him, he unfolded it, and presenting it, to the Pasha said, "This is your own Emperor's order, disobey it at your peril!"

This speech, spoken in the best Turkish, and accompanied with an independence of manner quite unknown to the despots to whom it was addressed, produced almost as great an effect as the blow which had been inflicted on the negro wrestler.

The Pasha opened his heavy eyes with astonishment; the Mufti looked confused, yet still full of wicked intent; the Imam curled up his lip with disdain; whilst Suleiman Aga looked straightforward, and seemed thrown into a sudden train of thought and perplexity.

After a considerable pause, the Pasha handed the firman over to the Mufti, who began its perusal with intense interest, throwing incredulity into the cast of his features,

and reading with the air of a man seeking for a plea of accusation. He stopped on a sudden, whilst a malicious smile broke out upon his sallow face, and said, "This firman is *bosh* — nothing. It is not addressed to us; the city of Kars is not mentioned therein. You have made an account without figures!"

"May you prosper!" said Mustafa, who had been deeply intent upon all that had taken place; "but, as I love my child, I swear that that firman has been read and respected throughout Asia. Kars, after all, is but a small place compared to the whole of Roum."

"Whose dog are you that dare to speak?" exclaimed the Mufti: "keep your tongue quiet; take care, lest the offences of your mouth be visited upon the soles of your unblessed feet. I say this firman is nothing to us." Then turning towards the Pasha he said: "This man is no Frank; he may be a Mussulman, or an Armenian, or an Arab, but he is no Frank. He talks Turkish better than we; he dresses as a Turk; and his name is Osman. What more would you have?"

“What is he then?” inquired the Pasha; “he must be something.”

“Who knows what he is?” said the Mufti with indignation. “Let us see whether he be not a spy; he may be a Russian spy; we will see. We will not allow the cap to be pulled from off our heads. We will not suffer the finger of shame to be pointed at our women, nor the word of the blessed Koran to be insulted and reviled for want of protection.”

“Can you make the profession of our faith, O man?” said the Imam to Osmond.

“I can make the profession of one faith,” said Osmond, with much spirit, who had now been worked up into a feeling of indignation by the insults heaped upon him,—“and that is, that I believe you all to be a set of rogues and miscreants, who have no other aim than to rob and oppress a defenceless man.”

This speech acted like a lighted match to a train of gunpowder, and they one and all exploded into invectives and exclamations, which exhibited every variety of passion. “*Kiupek!*—Dog!” said one. “*Giaour!*—Infidel!” said

another. "Ill-born!" cried a third;—and they all agreed in one sentiment, which was that his mother and sisters were vile, and that his father and grandfather were only fit for the dunghill. Mustafa would have stopped the raging of the storm, but his voice was lost in the universal uproar; Stasso, with his hands clenched, appeared prepared for the worst, and waited for what would happen next; whilst Osmond stood like a lion at bay, and seemed to defy the united efforts of the assembled barbarians.

When the rage of the company had in some measure subsided, and they began to consider upon the best means of securing Osmond's person, their blustering began to droop. His conduct had produced so great an effect upon them—of present fear of his valour, of apprehension for the future, that there was a pause. The Pasha then began to use soothing words and flattering speeches, in order to lull his suspicions of what might be in preparation for him; but, in so doing, he made a sign to one of the attendants, who

soon returned with a body of armed men, and into their charge he delivered him as a prisoner. Osmond, without farther expostulation, rose with dignity from his seat, and merely saying, "Upon your heads be it that an English subject is thus detained," he followed the officer, and left the room, accompanied by Mustafa and Stasso.

CHAPTER X.

Bra. A maiden never bold ;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself ; and she, in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, everything—
To fall in love with what she feared to look on ?

OTHELLO.

OSMOND was conducted to a small room in the Pasha's palace, situated within an apartment allotted to the *Kiaya*, or deputy governor, and there he was confined, a guard being placed over him. His first determination was to despatch Mustafa in all haste to Constantinople, in order that he might make known his situation to the King's ambassador there, and obtain a speedy release. He accordingly wrote to his friend Wortley, giving

him a full account of his adventures, and intreating him to use his best endeavours to send him assistance. He did not withhold the circumstance of his acquaintance with Ayesha, but described to him, with all the enthusiasm of a lover, her charms and perfections: he did not, however, permit himself to state what were his ulterior views with respect to drawing her from her seclusion; for he felt that the scheme of future happiness which he had so recently planned, was likely to evaporate as a vision or a dream. When he had finished his letter, he called Mustafa to him, and ordered him to depart forthwith. Instead of showing any joy or alacrity at this, the dejected courier shook his head and sat down.

“You tell me to depart,” said Mustafa, with a sigh; “where are the post-horses, where the Surugi? You do not know these people. It will be easier for me to get into paradise than to reach Constantinople;—we are prisoners!”

“How?” said Osmond; “you have done

nothing against their laws ! Why should you be punished, when I alone am to blame ?”

“ In this country if the master be in fault,” said the Tatar, “ the servants are the same. When the master eats stick, the servants eat also. Ah ! why did you speak to that woman ?”

“ It has been an unfortunate event,” said Osmond, thoughtfully, “ and we must get out of our difficulties as well as we can: however, you can lose nothing by making an effort to depart. You must tell the Pasha that I wish to procure proofs that I am what I profess myself to be, and then surely he cannot refuse to set me free ?”

“ And stand a chance of getting his own neck twisted off for his pains,” said Mustafa. “ No no ! neither he nor the Mufti are such fools as that.—Animals, yes ; but asses, no.”

“ What then is to be done ?” said Osmond.

“ You must give money,” said Mustafa ; “ if you will not tell lies, you must give money.”

“ I will give nothing,” answered his master,

with indignation : “ they may rob me if they choose ; but I will never bribe a tyrant to be just, or encourage a rogue in his roguery.”

“ That may be very well in your country,” said Mustafa ; “ but you do not know these fellows. A man here robs, beats, and murders, then says his prayers, and thanks the holy Prophet for all favours.”

Stasso was present whilst this conversation took place. During the progress of his master’s passion for Ayesha, he had always had forebodings that it would lead to misfortune, for he never divested himself of the idea that they had been struck by the evil eye of the negress Nourzadeh, on the day of their entry into Kars,—and what, thought he, could withstand the *kativochio* ? His energies, by this conviction, were paralyzed ; and the utmost that he could do was to pour out that volley of anathemas, ever so ready for use at the bottom of every Greek’s throat, and which he principally directed against Zabetta, who had been one of the leading causes of their present misery. “ *Diavolissa*—the she-devil,” was con-

tinually playing upon the surface of his lips, as he dwelt upon her attractions, as well as upon her pernicious influence over him. "I will cut off my whiskers," he would exclaim, "if I do not insult every Tiniote I meet, her father, mother, and sisters, the first and also the last."

Osmond at length, after making many resolutions, desired that Mustafa and Stasso together should ask permission of their keepers to conduct them to the Pasha, in order that they might demand on the part of their master, either that he would allow of his immediate departure, or permit Mustafa to proceed to Constantinople with letters addressed to the English ambassador, and thus also afford the Pasha an opportunity to state the reasons of his conduct to his own court.

The assembled Turks, after the departure of Osmond to prison, began to deliberate seriously what punishment they ought to inflict, or what they were to do with him. The Pasha was anxious to secure him for one of his prize-fighters; the Mufti, in league with the Imam, were for proceeding to extremities, and

dividing his goods among them ; whilst Suleiman Aga smoked, paused, and said nothing.

When Mustafa and Stasso appeared before them to make known their master's request, it soon became apparent that they were all of one mind upon that subject. They would neither allow of his departure nor of Mustafa's. The Mufti swore that all that he or they could assert would never convince him that Osmond was a Frank ; he particularly dwelt upon his language, his dress and appearance, and insisted that *Osman* was a name belonging only to a true believer. " Such being the case," said he, " he must bear the penalties of transgressing the law." The Pasha, fearing that he might lose all chances of possessing the services of so wonderful a pehlivan, strongly opposed his departure ; whilst Suleiman Aga smoked and pondered still. Mustafa and Stasso were ordered to return to their confinement, to communicate the refusal of the authorities to accede to their master's wishes ; and after coming to no resolution upon the punishment to be

awarded, the assembly broke up, with an agreement that they should meet again on the following morning.

Suleiman Aga returned with an unwilling step to his house. He foresaw the storm that was preparing for him ; he anticipated the angry looks and the unceasing wrangle of his wife ; but more than all, he feared to meet the sorrowful looks of Ayesha. He was not mistaken in his anticipations. The account of what had taken place at the dyer's house was soon rumoured abroad, and the whole story, down to the imprisonment of Osmond and his servants, was conveyed, with all the usual exaggerations, to Zabetta and Ayesha, by the old and officious Caterina. Here then was an end to all Zabetta's schemes of emancipation, and a cloud cast over Ayesha's early dawn of love. The one was thrown into a fever of anger, whilst the other bowed her head with meekness to the decrees of fate, but promised to herself to treasure up in her mind the recollection of that vision of bliss, which had visited her in the shape of one whom she was never more des-

tined to behold, and to endeavour to imitate those perfections, of which she might be said only to have caught a casual glimpse. When she heard of the manner in which her lover was treated, and, moreover, of the fate which awaited him, her heart sank within her, and her senses almost forsook her. The attack of the negro upon him had already been magnified into an attempt to take away his life; and having escaped that, his confinement was reported to be only preparatory to the death which he was doomed to suffer. The position of Ayesha was in every way most painful. What could a Mahomedan maiden do? Secluded from mankind by custom, as well as by the prohibitions of her faith, how could she come forward to assist and protect one who was an enemy to her religion, without implicating his safety as well as her own? From the moment she had heard of his seizure, she was lost in thought; the colour forsook her cheeks, her whole appearance bespoke anguish and despair. She knew her father to be a rigid Mussulman; and although he was naturally passive, and disposed

to take the reverses of life with more than the philosophy of a predestinarian, yet in every thing that regarded women, their purity and seclusion, he was jealous and vindictive to the highest degree. At one moment, relying upon her influence upon him, she determined to avow her love for Osmond, and to implore his interference to save him. At another, she recollected to what a pitch his anger had been excited by his suspicions of her mother, and she feared that he would not be more lenient towards herself. She had frequently heard of the cruelties committed by her countrymen upon Christians; and in the violence of her love, she could see nothing but the dear object of her affections exposed to the brutalities and the outrage of the Pasha and the Mufti. Again, she reflected how effectually her father could stay their hand, could she but enlist him in her cause: and again she despaired, for what is there so inexorable as religious persecution upon principle? Pondering deeply upon Osmond's situation as well as upon her own, she at length determined, happen what might, to

make one vigorous effort to save him, even were her father to proceed to the utmost extremities with her.

Suleiman Aga, upon reaching his house, stole quietly to his own apartment to smoke and think: this he did for some time before he proceeded to the harem, when, finding upon inquiry that his wife had gone out, and that Ayesha was alone, he arose and sought her. He found her, as he had anticipated, sorrowful and dejected. She was seated in a corner, apparently mindful of nothing, with an abstracted look, and was not conscious of the presence of her father until he actually stood before her; she then stood up, as children in the East are wont to do before their parents, and waited his pleasure.

“Ayesha,” said he, “look at me, why are you so sorrowful? Am I not your father? Speak but a little — wherefore so?”

At these words, which were spoken with as great an expression of tenderness as the phlegmatic man could command, the grief-stricken maiden burst into an agonizing flood

of tears. She had in vain sought for consolation in her distress; she had found none in her mother, and none in her own thoughts; and when the kind words of her father struck her ear, every fibre of her heart was softened, and her whole nature melted into tenderness.

Suleiman, whilst he allowed her tears to flow, was himself affected; and although he was no great adept in the art of endearments, he managed by his words and manner to soothe this ebullition of Ayesha's grief, and to inspire her with corresponding confidence. She first expressed her sorrow for having been the cause of giving him so much displeasure and uneasiness; bewailed that she should have brought so much misery upon Osmond, and finished by intreating her father to exert all his influence to skreen the youth from harm.

“God knows,” said she, “what grief I have devoured,—I am weak,—whatever I did to resist my feelings was of no use, fate struck me, and made me act. I never intended to displease you.”

“But in the name of Allah!” said Sulei-

man, “wherefore not speak to me? have I not always been your friend?”

“True you say, O my father!” returned Ayesha; “but who could ever think that so much distress would fall upon me, from an accident which happened to another!” Upon which she described every circumstance relating to her first acquaintance with Osmond — his fall — her alarm — his respectful behaviour — her running to his assistance.

“Allah! Allah!” exclaimed Suleiman, “did he see your face?”

“What can I say?” answered the maiden, “perhaps yes, perhaps no; I did not know what I did: I fear that we looked at each other, and during that time fate struck us; from that moment a change was worked in my mind, and, from being happy and in peace, ever since then I have been full of anxiety and strange hopes.

Suleiman, upon hearing this, shook his head and pondered. “But then,” said he, “he fell sick,—we heard that from Caterina,—what did you do then? you saw him no more for some time?”

“*Ahi!*” said Ayesha, sighing, “’tis true I saw him no more then, but Allah! Allah! what a thing is memory! how treacherous is thought Idid nothing but think of him.”

“You thought of him, Ayesha?” said her father, “that was wrong.”

“But what could a poor maiden do against fate?” she returned :—“besides was there a day in which Caterina did not come to me and sing his praises?”

“The praises of an infidel — of a Giaour!” exclaimed Suleiman Aga, as if he were horror-struck; “I am astonished. That Caterina is an old bit of misfortune. This must not be. We are Mussulmans. Let the infidel perish. Shall we be polluted in our very harems? Ayesha, this must not be. You have committed sin.”

“*Babām!*—O my father!” exclaimed Ayesha in alarm, “are we not all God’s creatures? Why should an innocent man perish, though he be not of our faith? Oh, think better of this, and save him.”

“Allah, Allah!” exclaimed Suleiman, “you a Mahomedan maiden, and speak thus? To

what end have my instructions served, if you are ignorant of what is decreed against infidels? You have read our book of faith, and are you now to plead in favour of a Giaour? Ayesha, do you love this Frank?"

Ayesha was overpowered with contending emotions; her father's stern intolerance was so directly opposed to the spirit of Osmond's benevolence, that she could not but feel how amiable was the one, and how reprehensible the other. Still she saw that all was lost if she did not control her feelings; and she remained silent for a while, until, fearing that the most dreadful fate was about to befall her lover, she fell on her knees before her father, and said,—

“If any one is in fault, it is I. I alone am guilty—do what you please with me, I will not repine; but save the innocent youth. If he dies, Ayesha dies also.”

The grave Turk had never contemplated such a misfortune as the loss of his daughter; little did he suspect how deeply her affections were engaged, and now his eyes were opened. He would have exploded with anger but for

the beautiful form and imploring attitude before him ; his own sense of what was right impelled one way, whilst his affection led him the other. He was perplexed how to act, and would have left his daughter without a reply, had not a thought struck him that a compromise might be made, by which her happiness would be secured, and his own rectitude remain unsullied.

“ Ayesha, my lamb,” said he, as he made her rise, “ the decrees of fate are indeed unalterable. We will make a thought for your happiness.”

“ Heaven bless my father for those words !” exclaimed the distressed maiden ; “ Think not of the happiness of Ayesha ; she will be content happen whatever may ; but let him protect the innocent. What have you devised ?”

“ Let the Giaour become a true believer ; let him forsake his faith, and adopt that of the blessed Prophet and his followers, and as there is but one Allah, Ayesha shall become his wife. Suleiman has spoken the word.”

Ayesha's bosom heaved with new sensations, and although she felt a sad foreboding, from the knowledge which she had already acquired of Osmond's sentiments, that this could never be, yet her eyes beamed with delight upon hearing this proposal of her father. She kissed his hand, and made her acknowledgments of gratitude; and although she could not control that look of despondency which marked her real feelings, still in his eyes she appeared comforted and at ease.

At this juncture Zabetta entered the apartment. She had bestirred herself most actively to acquire information in the city concerning the seizure of Osmond, and was just returned. Her passions were roused at what she had heard. At one place it was said that an infidel had arrived, and, aided by a worshipper of Satan, had carried off Suleiman Aga's daughter into the Kurdistan mountains. At another, she was told that, Suleiman Aga having found his wife with the Giaour, he had thrust her into a sack, and drowned her in the

river. Then those who resided near the Pasha's palace affirmed that the Pasha's Ethiopian had broken the infidel's back, and that he was lying dead in the court. At length she ascertained to a certainty what had really taken place, and she returned home in full venom against her husband. As soon as she perceived him, she exclaimed, "And so, you have become the destroyer of your own house? Mashallah! you have brought your beard to a good market! All the world, men, women, and children, are passing their whole time in spitting at it, and for what? because a dog of an Imam chooses to come and tell you lies!"

"Zabetta," said Suleiman, unmoved, "are you become mad? Am I to blame because I have done nothing?"

"How! done nothing?" screamed the angry woman: "Is dishonouring your wife and oppressing your child, nothing? Is making us the talk and derision of the whole city, nothing? Is the oppression of an innocent man,

nothing? Is putting him in danger of his life, nothing? *Eh vah!* by what account do you reckon?"

"As Allah is great," said Suleiman, "I have done nothing! If the hind chooses to squat before the lion, is it the lion's fault that he eats him up? When a Giaour, of his own accord, leaves his own country, and comes hither to insult our laws, is it the Mussulman's fault that he defends them, and punishes the guilty? Women talk with their hearts, and not with their heads."

"What have you to say against women?" said Zabetta, in a voice of anger. "Without women what would you be? What but a dried-up old stump, with nothing to refresh you? What but a dirty heap in a corner, without a helping hand to purify you? Go, go, you talk as if your tongue belonged to your hands instead of your head. You straight come to your stick and your strength, when the little wit which you possess has left your brain. You may uphold your men when women are not here to guide you; but as

long as you have a Zabetta in your house, you shall hear her and her only, even had you but one ear to help you to hear her words. I say you must not allow that ill-fated infidel to perish; he must be saved; and as you have caused the evil, so must you bring back the good."

"Are you mad, O woman!" exclaimed Suleiman, "to speak thus? Wherefore do you coin useless words? Who but the Imam is the accuser of the Frank?—he saw the deed—he bears witness to the crime. What can I say against facts?"

"Imam! Imam!" exclaimed Zabetta mockingly, as she rested her hands upon her hips, looking straight into her husband's face; "one would think from your words that that old scarecrow, who croaks out his profession of faith from the minaret top, was as sacred a personage as the Prophet himself! But what is he but an old dotard? a toothless, beardless churl, who, instead of minding his *azan* and the affairs of his mosque, chooses, like a bird of ill-omen as he is, to

soar over and pry into our harems; to look where he should not; to imagine evil where none is meant; to destroy men's houses by his vile falsehoods; to set father against daughter, and husband against wife; and to spread such false rumours as may produce misfortunes, and none but Allah knows where they may stop. Go, go! let us hear no more of your Imam, except when you may have secured for him a sound bastinado upon the soles of his feet. Suleiman Aga! you must put an end to this thralldom. Go to the *mekemeh*, and insist that the infidel Ingliz be set at liberty. *Wallah billah!*—I will not rest until he is."

Suleiman allowed this burst of his wife's volubility and rage to subside, and then looking at Ayesha, replied, "What I have said, I have said. If the infidel will consent to abandon his faith, and adopt that of Islam, she shall become his wife; and then all will be well."

"What words are these?" exclaimed Zabetta. "She shall become his wife, do you

say ? she shall become no man's wife unless I choose it. Am I nothing, that I am not to be consulted ? What man in the world is there who knows anything about marriages ? men can no more select a husband for their daughters, than they can choose the colour of their wives' vest. Let them keep to their pipes, their horses, and their camels ; let them sit in the bazaar, buy, sell, fight, and steal, but let them not meddle in what concerns them not. Allah ! Allah ! what is the world to become if a mother cannot do what she pleases with her own daughter ? Go, man ! go smoke, go pray, but leave marriages to women."

"There is no harm in what you say," returned Suleiman, with a most placid mien, "be it so. But if you wish to save the infidel's life, he must first abjure his faith ; and if it be your desire that your daughter remain unhurt, she must marry him after his abjuration of his own faith, and when he has adopted ours."

These words in some measure stopped the current of Zabetta's rage, and she was so far

cooled as to perceive that, if something were not done, all her own hopes of emancipation from Kars must fall to the ground, and thus this opportunity, so favourable to her views, would be lost. She therefore gradually desisted from that fierce opposition which she was in the habit of making to every proposal emanating from her husband, and, like the gradual cessation of artillery which marks the close of a battle, she withdrew from the contest by slowly diminishing the power of her angry words, and at length quitted the room under cover of a low growl.

When left in full possession of her harem by the absence of Suleiman, she closeted herself with Ayesha, and there she gave full vent to her feelings at the untoward turn which their acquaintance with Osmond had taken. She disclosed to her the various schemes which had passed through her mind for effecting his release. She first thought of despatching a messenger to the nearest Russian post on the frontier, in order to invite the officer in command there to an attack on the

town. She next turned her thoughts to a chieftain in the Kurdistan, a friend of hers, who might be useful in destroying the Mufti, or carrying him and the Imam prisoners into the mountains. She afterwards thought how bribes might best be administered, in order to open the gates of Osmond's prison; but, the more she devised schemes, the more one after the other they appeared impracticable. At length she was obliged to sit down in the conviction that, for once in his life, her husband's scheme was the most feasible, and that, after all, Osmond Turk would serve her purpose just as well as Osmond Christian; for she thought to herself, let him but once rid me of this horrid place, and then I care not what happens to him.

Ayesha was for the moment relieved by the hope that her lover's life was not in danger; but, after due reflection, she could not conceal from herself that the blow, although it might be averted by her father's interference, would only fall the more heavily, from the line of conduct which she felt sure Osmond would

pursue. She could not entirely open her heart to her mother, for experience had taught her that she was ever too much impelled by passion and sudden impulse to act with the prudence and circumspection so necessary in the present posture of her affairs; and moreover she felt, that as the scheme which filled her mother's mind had reference entirely to her own well-being, it would be wise not to intrude her own, and thus produce a collision which might be fatal to all parties. The maiden, called upon to act upon an occasion of difficulty, exhibited all at once a sagacity far beyond her years; and she now first learned the elements of that fortitude which accompanied her through the series of adventures which it will be our task to bring to light in the forthcoming narrative.

CHAPTER XI.

The Mahometans are neither involved in the impiety of atheism, nor the darkness of idolatry; and their religion, false as it is, has many articles of belief in common with our own: which will facilitate our labours in diffusing the true faith, and dispose them to receive it.—FORSTER'S *Mahometanism Unveiled*.

ON the following morning the authorities met to deliberate upon the best course to pursue in regard to their prisoner. Each party put forward their opinion; lenity was urged on the part of the Pasha, severity on that of the Mufti and Imam. Suleiman Aga, having been called upon for his decision, offered the alternative which he had proposed to his wife and daughter. "If," said he, "the infidel will embrace the Mahomedan faith, nothing more need be said; he shall marry my daughter."

This proposal was unexpected, and produced a pause in the deliberations. As good Muslims, neither of them could object to it, for they were bound to make proselytes in the best manner they could, and here was too favourable an opportunity to be missed; but this stroke of Suleiman Aga's magnanimity did not hit precisely in the right place the intentions of either the Pasha or the Mufti. The Pasha wanted to secure a good pehlivan, and was ready to have paid a price for Osmond, should death have been decreed to him; whilst the Mufti was expecting to make a good harvest of gain by the youth's delinquency; but with this compromising proposal both were likely to lose their object, although their faith would gain a true believer, and Suleiman a son-in-law. However, as Suleiman Aga strenuously persisted in his scheme, nothing more could be said, and it was determined forthwith that their prisoner should be ordered to appear before them, and the decision to which they had come be duly announced to him.

Osmond, in the mean time, had enjoyed full leisure to reflect upon the situation in which he was placed. Notwithstanding all the buoyancy and spirit of his youth, notwithstanding the natural force and manliness which formed a principal feature of his character, yet, when he looked around him and found himself destitute of help, far away from friends and protectors, a prisoner in the hands of barbarians, and guilty of what in their estimation was a crime only to be expiated by death, his fortitude was shaken, and he began to despair of his safety.

The tender passion which had been awakened in his breast by Ayesha, interfered not to soothe, but to add more bitterness to his feelings. Whatever schemes he had conceived in her favour were now blasted, and he dreaded to think to what horrors and brutalities she might be exposed on his account. He dwelt upon her perfections, recalled the conversations they had held together, repeated to himself the endearing expressions of love with which she had charmed his ears, only to feel more intensely the misery of his situation. His imagination

would then wander to his own country—his own home ; he would picture to himself what dread desolation would strike the hearts of his parents when they heard of his fate, and was moved to tears in the remembrance of all the dear friends of his youth, with whom he, perhaps, had parted for ever ! Nor was the presence of his fellow-prisoners, Mustafa and Stasso, of any real comfort to him ; for they too moaned over this check to their prosperity, and added, by their anticipations of what might probably be their destiny, to the gloom and horror which surrounded them.

Mustafa did nothing but con over the barbarities which were peculiar to the region in which they then were. He affirmed that the Turks put their prisoners to death by impalement ; the Persians, by cutting the body into equal parts, or by explosion from a bomb ; the Kurds, by strangling, or burying alive ; and, by way of being learned on these matters, he discussed whether, if their heads were cut off, the Mufti would have the courtesy to allow his head, as being that of a true believer, to be placed under his arm, or whether he

would be condemned, along with his master and Stasso, as an infidel, to be degraded and abused.

“Allah send them misfortunes!” he would exclaim; “may their houses be ruined! we may die here like dogs, and no one will be near us to cover our faces or turn our feet towards the blessed Mecca!”

“*Allah kerim der*—God is merciful!” said Osmond, endeavouring to keep up the spirits of the dejected man; “let us hope for the best.”

“Allah kerim is very well in its way,” sighed Mustafa, “but what good will that do me when my head is off?”

“Why do you think of your head,” exclaimed the faithful Stasso, “when our master’s life is in jeopardy? May the wicked one take her to himself—that black devil!” alluding to Nour-zadeh, “for she it is who has brought us into this scrape.”

In the middle of these their discussions, the door of the prison was opened, and, with the usual salutation in his mouth, the Pasha’s chokhadar made his appearance, stating the orders of his master, that Osmond should

immediately repair to the presence. He would answer nothing to the questions put to him both by Osmond and Mustafa, excepting the indefinite '*Bakalum*—we shall see!' the refuge of every Turk in ignorance or indolence; and straightway marshalling himself at their head, he led them into the room where the Pasha, the Mufti, the Imam, and Suleiman Aga, were assembled, besides a *khoja* or scribe, in readiness to make any notes that might be necessary.

As soon as Osmond appeared, it was evident that they did not intend to extend to him the courtesy of allowing him to sit; but this question he soon settled himself, by at once placing himself next to the Pasha,—an action in the eyes of all present so extraordinary, and so imposing by the resoluteness which it proclaimed, that, instead of militating against him, it acted in his favour; for Orientals are ever awed by an assertion of dignity.

The prize-fighting Pasha, enveloped in furs and shawls, was excited into something like nervous agitation at the neighbourhood of one whom he looked upon as an eater of lions,

which he evinced by moving his seat about a span, at the same time coaxing his lips into flattering and conciliatory expressions. The Mufti, too, was startled, but he was not to be cheated out of his inflexibility; the Imam was passive, and Suleiman Aga appeared as usual, torpid and indifferent. At length, when it was plain that Osmond intended no overt act of assault, and sat quietly in his place, the Mufti opened his lips and said, "We have sent for you, O Frank! in consequence of complaints made against you: here is the man," pointing to Suleiman Aga, "who sues you for an outrage done to his harem—Speak, Suleiman Aga, what accusation have you against this Frank?"

"My accusation is this," said the Turk: "that this man, infidel to our faith and stranger in our land, did seduce and hold converse with one of our harem; and this man here," pointing to the Imam, "is my witness."

"If you are the witness," said the Mufti to the Imam, "state what you saw."

"May you live many years!" said the Imam, with an hypocritical tone of voice, "I am wit-

ness to the fact — I, with my own eyes, saw this Frank with a woman of our faith upon the terrace of the house of Bogos, the Armenian dyer — What more can I say ?”

“ Frank ! speak,” said the Mufti to Osmond, “ what have you to say to this accusation ?”

“ I have before acknowledged that I did meet with and speak to a woman on the Armenian’s terrace,” said Osmond with firmness, “ and I acknowledge it again. It was not my intention to infringe your laws, for in my own country men speak freely to women, and do not controvert the laws of God in so doing.”

“ What says the law on this occasion,” said the Mufti, addressing the scribe, who had hitherto taken note of the proceedings. The scribe turned to a copy of the Koran, and, taking it up with much reverence, opened the leaves, and after some search stopped at a passage, to which he pointed with his finger, and then read aloud, “ As for the unbelievers, it will be equal to them whether thou admonish them, or do not admonish them, they will not believe — God hath sealed up their

hearts and their hearing, a dimness covereth their sight, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment."

The assembled company looked at Osmond as these words were read, when the Mufti said, "Have you heard, O Frank? what can you say against receiving your merited punishment? You, who wear our dress and adopt our manners, must know that you have transgressed against our laws, invaded the sacred privacy of our harem, and thus, admonished or not admonished, you have persisted in your sin—wherefore should you not be punished?"

"The passage which has just been read," said Osmond with great self-possession, "has nothing to do with my holding conversation with one of your women—show me a law against it, and I will answer you."

The Mufti, who knew that there was no special injunction in the Koran against an unbeliever holding communication with women of the true faith, and who had twisted a general denunciation into a special one, as the custom frequently is among Mahomedan law-

yers when their sacred book is at fault, grew angry at Osmond's answer, and made a long and confused exposition of the law against unbelievers in general, which it is unnecessary to repeat, but which only left him more open than before to the criticism and exposition of his prisoner. Suleiman Aga, who was a sound Mahomedan, and who had paid great attention to the discussion, seeing how ill the argument was conducted on the part of his countryman, thus briefly broke silence and said, "All infidels are worthy of death, of that there is no doubt—throw no more words into the air upon that head, but hearken to these words;" and taking the Koran from the hands of the scribe, and turning over a few pages he stopped at this passage, which he read aloud, "'Give not in marriage women who believe, to the idolaters, until they believe.' This is positive, and it is also positive that unbelievers are worthy of death. Let the Frank embrace our faith, and I will give him my daughter in marriage. Should he refuse—let him die. I have said."

Upon this the Mufti, who was pleased at

being delivered from his embarrassment, expressed his approbation, and was seconded by that of the Pasha and the Imam. He then said to Osmond, "Have you heard? This is our ordinance: instantly make the profession of our faith, accept Suleiman Aga's daughter for a wife, and live;—refuse, and you die."

Osmond, who had not anticipated this result, was struck with perplexity. He would have at once rejected with indignation the invitation to become an apostate to his own faith, but he recollected that the fate of his enchanting mistress might be involved in his own; therefore, to gain time, he appeared to listen to the proposal, if not with approbation, still not with disgust and anger. With as much calmness as he could command, he said, "As for embracing your faith, prove to me that it is better than mine and I agree, with this proviso, that, if I can prove to you that my faith is better than yours, you will adopt it in preference to your own." Then turning to Suleiman Aga he said, "And with respect to receiving your daughter for my wife, with this hand and heart

I accept her under all circumstances, and offer you my gratitude for the gift."

Upon hearing Osmond's words, the assembly sat mute for some time, reflecting upon their import, and full of wonder at what might be the result. The Mufti, however, who soon perceived what an advantage his prisoner had ceded to them by his proposal, said with great gravity, "There is no harm in what the Frank proposes. We accept. Let him prove that our sacred religion is false (which Allah forbid!) then we will become Christians; but, as Allah is in heaven, as the holy Mahomet is his Prophet, we swear, should he not cede to conviction, although convinced, and should he be obstinate in refusing to be convinced, then, by the beard of the Prophet I swear that he dies!" To which his compeers gravely and emphatically answered "*Evalla*—truly yes."

During his early studies, Osmond had paid great attention to everything which had reference to the East, and in particular to the religion of Mahomet, and to the extraordinary fact, that so large a portion of the human race

should be living under the delusion of a false faith, subjecting themselves to its laws, and influencing their hopes of futurity by its false promises. His mind, accustomed to embrace large and extensive views of the schemes of Providence, did not view Mahomet merely in the light of a designing adventurer, an artful fanatic, or an ambitious chieftain; but he referred to the unalterable truths of prophecy recorded in the sacred scriptures, to expound the difficulties which existed in his mind concerning the sway which his doctrines had acquired throughout Asia. Adopting the opinions of one of our learned modern divines, he had taught himself to look upon the Arabs, amongst whom he had travelled, as the descendants of Ishmael, and upon the Turks, who had so taken up the spirit of the Prophet's views, as the most powerful upholders of the false faith, both working out the truths of prophecy. He had always held the opinion that the false faith was so nearly imitative of the true, that in time it was preparing the way for the conversion of those who now professed it;

and that those doctrines which they found interspersed throughout the Koran, which had been taken from the book of truth and incorporated into the book of falsehood, would, as it were, be the virus which in time would bring out the baleful disease, and produce a renewed and wholesome state of being. When, therefore, the proposal was made to him by the Mufti to abandon his own faith and to adopt the Mahomedan, he was immediately struck by the idea that an opportunity was now afforded him of exposing the falsity of the Prophet's doctrine, and that, however weak and superficial such an exposition might be, still he might perhaps be the means of shaking some one mind, and adding his mite to the contributions which were now making in furtherance of the great object of converting the heathen to Christianity.

Having been reconducted to his prison, he turned his mind to the serious task which he had imposed upon himself. He repeated to himself all the arguments which he thought would be most likely to produce conviction upon his anta-

gonists—arguments, on the one hand, to subvert the false basis upon which Mahomedanism was founded, and on the other to uphold that which formed the groundwork of Christianity. His ardent mind lost sight, in this exercise, of the imminent danger to which he was about to be exposed, and, looking upon himself as a champion of his religion, he felt prepared to encounter every species of martyrdom in the struggle which he was about to undergo.

Not so, however, did his companions meet the forthcoming controversy. They began to esteem their master as one but a degree removed from a madman. They had been accustomed to hear Englishmen called ‘*delhi Ingliz*,’ the mad English, and now they were about to learn the truth of that appellation, as illustrated in their master; for though hitherto they had admired his wisdom and respected his high personal qualities, yet, in this instance, they feared that the nerve of insanity had been touched, and that he would be truly entitled to the epithet often applied to his countrymen.

“By Allah! he is mad,” said Mustafa to Stasso. “He does not know these Turks. What do they care for what he may say! All they want is his property—they do not care an *asper* for his doctrine. Let an infidel wear a green turban, or even put on yellow slippers, without permission; let him go into a mosque, or even into a bath, unprotected, and they will tear him to pieces. What then will they not do when they hear him announce in full assembly that their religion is false, and that the blessed Mahomed is an impostor? Allah! Allah! they will fall upon him like lions and wolves, and drink his blood. And what will happen to us? They will drink our blood also.”

“What can I do?” said Stasso, looking the picture of woe; “he is a Frank, and, what is more, an Englishman. Englishmen are very devils—they neither go to the right nor left—but straight on—they go—they never will believe that danger is before them, they never do things like other people—they never will run away. Don’t you remember, Mustafa, some

years ago at Constantinople, when a Jew was hung opposite to the gate of the bazaar, and everybody ran away fearing he might be obliged to perform the operation, that an English sailor, walking along with the greatest indifference, was seized upon and ordered to do it? and that, instead of running off, he willingly lent himself to the task, threw the rope over the first beam, and having hauled up the wretch as if he had been a cask, quietly turned about and inquired if there were any more?—As you love your mother, this is true ! they are all mad from first to last.”

They then determined to expostulate with their master, in order to divert him from his intention ; and to propose a scheme for bribing their keeper, escaping from the walls of the city, and making the best of their way to the Russian frontier. But when they did so, they found him inexorable ; he was determined not to flinch from the proposal which he himself had made, and informed his servants that, if they would not stand by him, they were at perfect liberty to depart, assuring them that,

by letters which he would give them to his agent at Constantinople, he would secure to them a full and ample remuneration for their services. Stasso's fidelity remained unchanged ; Mustafa's very probably would not have proved so firm had he possessed the means of taking advantage of his master's offer, but, as he would have found the post-houses shut to him, and probably would have lost his situation at the British embassy had he returned to Constantinople without his charge, he thought it best to remain where he was, and to take the chance of whatever *kismet*, fate, might throw in his way.

Whilst that which we have just related was passing in Osmond's prison, the Turkish dignitaries remained together in council. Some time before, a circumstance of a nearly similar nature had taken place in Persia: a pious Frank had appeared there, and had advanced such arguments in favour of the religion of Christ that none of the Persian doctors could answer him. The Turks on this occasion were determined to do better, and to put forth so much

learning, and advance such arguments as would at once rival their neighbours and annihilate the Frank. Accordingly they collected all that the city possessed of wisdom and learning, —Khodjas, Mollahs, Hakîms, Imams, all were assembled; but that which they most depended upon was the sagacity of a celebrated Dervish, who lived a recluse in a mountain cell, where he practised austerities and prayed without ceasing. He was said to have the Koran by heart, and was so well versed in the sayings of the blessed Mahomet, that no one could compete with him. He seldom appeared in the city, and, when he did, was so beset by applicants for talismans, charms, and medicinal nostrums, that he could scarcely move for the crowd which beset him. The very hairs of his beard were preserved as relics, and even the parings of his nails had a price. To him the Mufti sent a deputation, requesting his attendance upon the appointed day, announcing to him that the Mahomedan faith was in danger, and that an unbelieving Frank had undertaken to dispute its authenticity.

Nothing was spoken of in Kars but the approaching controversy; and the zeal of each true believer was heightened to such a pitch, that it was looked upon as certain, if Osmond should venture to walk the streets unprotected, he would be torn to pieces by the populace. The news soon reached the ears of Zabetta and Ayesha, who were affected by the report in a very different manner. The one was fully aware of the danger of the undertaking in which Osmond had engaged, and, little caring about his motives, which she would have derided had she known them, looked upon him in a worse light than Mustafa and Stasso had done—for they only thought him a madman, she a fool: the other, wrapped up in the object of her admiration with an intensity of the most ardent love, was smitten with fear and apprehension at the dangers which awaited him. To oppose himself single-handed to a multitude of fanatics in religion, to attempt by argument to convince them of their errors, and to attack their prejudices, one of which was hatred and abhorrence

of infidels, and contempt of Europeans in general, was altogether so wild a scheme, that even to Ayesha, who admired Osmond as much for his wisdom as she adored him as a lover, it appeared downright madness. All she could do was to pray for his safety. She passed her time solely and entirely in thinking of him, in repeating to herself all that he had ever said to her, in bringing before her mind's eye every feature of his face, and in devising means for his escape.

Such was the state of things in Kars; and those who are at all acquainted with Turks, with their jealousy at any interference in matters of their faith, with the quickness of their revenge, and contempt of life when their passions are roused, will be able to judge of the dangerous predicament in which Osmond was placed. Perhaps, had he been himself fully aware of it, he would not have risked his life in so unequal a contest; but, impelled by a spirit of enterprise, actuated by an ardent desire to do good, and feeling himself called upon to uphold his religion, even at the risk of his

life, he was blind to danger, and determined, happen what might, to proceed with vigour in what he had undertaken. The result he left to the disposition of Providence.

CHAPTER XII.

War is enjoined you against the infidels.

Koran, ch. 2.

THE day being appointed for the controversy, the *medresseh*, or school, which adjoined the principal mosque, was selected for the place of assembly. On the morning of that day, every one who had any pretension to sanctity was seen making his way to the spot : men with large turbans and scanty beards ; Imams with wan faces ; scribes, young and old ; those connected with the schools, dervishes, the attendants upon the Mufti, and indeed, it may be said, all who hated Franks and upheld the Mahomedan faith. By the time they had taken their places, the *medresseh*

was nearly filled, so that dense rows of turbans, faces, and beards, appeared rising one above the other in a compact mass, as one may have seen in an Eastern market piles of water-melons in a stall. A vacant space in front had been prepared for the Pasha, the Mufti, the Ayans, and others of the chief men of Kars, duly cushioned and carpeted; whilst those who from their learning or superior wisdom were entitled to consideration, were placed in a conspicuous position, for the better confronting the adverse party. When the Pasha had taken his seat, the Mufti, Suleiman Aga, and others in authority also arrived, and took theirs: but the person to whom the greatest respect was paid, was the recluse, the old man of God from the mountains. He had arrived, pursuant to the call, and his appearance had given a fresh impetus to the zeal and fanaticism which more or less pervaded all ranks and classes. He was a short man, shrivelled, wan, and haggard; his eye deeply sunk in his head; his lips always in motion, reciting passages of the Koran; and

his person was always fixed in one position, which never deviated from the perpendicular. A very scanty rag of green was wound round a brown felt cap, by way of head-dress ; an old weather-beaten cloak covered his shoulders, whilst a leathern girdle kept together a vest that would have fallen to pieces had it not been so compressed. In the assembly he was placed in the seat of honour, a distinction to which he appeared totally indifferent ; and if human weakness could have been detected, perhaps it would have been found to consist in the vanity of being poor, when compared with the riches which were so conspicuous in the dress and equipages of the Pasha.

The Mahomedans were now duly seated. The eyes of the crowd having feasted upon the poor Saint, upon the gorgeous Pasha, and upon the high officers of the city, now became impatient for the appearance of the Frank, whom, beforehand, each had in their minds devoted to perdition. After a sufficient lapse of time Osmond at length appeared, followed by Mustafa and Stasso, and conducted by the

Pasha's guard, headed by a principal officer. In his passage from the place of his confinement, he had been struck by the extraordinary agitation which prevailed among the people, for the Turks are proverbially passive and indifferent ; and this circumstance tended greatly to impress him with the difficulty and danger of the enterprise in which he was engaged. The women in particular, who are but seldom seen, were now collected in flocks, and although they were not admitted into the place of congregation, yet in the streets through which he passed, on the walls, at the windows, on the tops of the baths, and on the terraces, he saw them in dense masses, enveloped in their white veils so closely that their faces were not to be recognised. The sight of them brought Ayesha to his mind more vividly than ever ; and he endeavoured to persuade himself that one figure, possessing grace and dignity above the rest, was herself—but perhaps it was only a passing dream. He felt that none but her faithful heart could beat with interest

for his fate ; and he could cheer himself with no reflection that, if he were surrounded by enemies, he still had friends ready to receive and cherish him should the others prevail. However, the instant he came in sight of the assembled Turks in the medresseh, his spirit rose, and he was himself again. Independent and dignified in manner, serious in his demeanour, with grace and modesty in his actions, his whole appearance would have inspired the unprejudiced with love and respect ; but the moment he entered the assembly was the signal for a general manifestation of looks of contempt and indications of contumely among those before whom he stood. He received no encouraging smile, no friendly hand was held out to greet him ; every face which met his eye wore the look of enmity. A place had been set apart for him, to which the Pasha pointed, saying, “ *Otour*—sit ;” which Osmond without further difficulty did. Amidst the whisperings and suppressed expressions of contempt which were heard to issue from the assembled Turks, the Mufti’s

voice at length, addressing Osmond, broke silence, as follows :

“ Frank ! Osman Aga ! you are come here in consequence of your own proposal. You have said that, if we can convince you that the religion of the blessed Mahomed is the true one, you will reject your own, and adopt it ; and that if you can convince us that your faith is the truth, then we must reject ours and adopt yours—Is it so ? ”

“ You have said right,” answered Osmond ; “ it is so. At the same time,” continued he, as he pointed to the assembled mass before him, “ I must claim protection for my person before we proceed, otherwise the contest will be unequal. What can an unprotected man do against so many ? ”

“ Man ! ” said the Mufti, “ you forget that you have transgressed against our laws ! This is a trial of life or death. The penalty of not embracing our faith is death !—embrace it, and you become the husband of the daughter of Suleiman Aga.”

Osmond at this announcement felt more

strongly than ever the fearful odds which were against him, and for a moment his courage forsook him ; but, rousing his energies by reflecting that his fate was in the hands of that Being in whose will are the issues of life and death, and that he might be an instrument in furthering the great scheme for the propagation of Christianity, he said no more, but allowed the affair to proceed. He felt of how much consequence it was that he should endeavour to dispel the prejudice which he too plainly perceived existed against him in the assembly, and therefore lost no time in obtaining the first hearing. Instead of attempting at the outset to oppose their creed or hurt their prejudices, he began his address by expatiating in high and sounding words upon the success which Mahomedanism had met with in the world ; stating the length of its duration, and enumerating the vast portion of the inhabitants of the globe which acknowledged its obligations. His wish was at first to fix the attention of his auditors by interesting and amusing them with his-

torical references and details. He alluded to the origin of the Arabians, gave a short account of the history of Abraham their patriarch and ancestor, and then exhibited the different promises which had been made to his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael; "how Isaac had, through Judaism and Christianity, given laws and religion to a great portion of the inhabited world; whilst Ishmael, through the primitive Arabians and the variously incorporated Moslems, had given laws and religion to a still larger portion of mankind. How Isaac new-modelled the faith and morals of men, first, through his literal descendants the Jews, and secondly, through his spiritual descendants the Christians; and how Ishmael effected a corresponding revolution in the world, first, through his literal descendants the Arabs, and secondly, his spiritual descendants the Turks and Tartars. He showed that, in the case of Isaac, the change was wrought by the advent of Jesus Christ, a person uniting in himself by divine appointment the offices of prophet and apostle, of priest, lawgiver, and king, and whose character and

claims are equally unprecedented ; and in that of Ishmael the change was effected by the appearance of Mahomet, a person professing to unite in himself the same offices as by the divine appointment, and presenting in this union the only known parallel to Jesus Christ and his typical forerunners in the annals of the world.”*

By the time he had proceeded thus far in his discourse, he saw that the angry disposition of the assembly had been materially allayed ; that his soft and persuasive manner, set off by his intimate knowledge of the language in which he addressed them, had produced a change in his favour ; and that the doctrine which he expounded, so new and unheard of to them, had fixed all their attention. Having established a parallel between Jesus Christ and Mahomet, showing the divine appointment of the one and the self-appointment of the other, without having materially disturbed the sensation in his favour, he again diverged into the history of their celebrated lawgiver. He remarked that the propagation of his religion, whether

* Forster's *Mahometanism Unveiled*, vol. i. pp. 71, 72.

considered in its rapidity or in its extent, presented a signal and singular contrast. He showed that, encountering simultaneously the rival empires of Rome, and Persia in the East, the immediate successors of Mahomet established, at the same moment, their dominion over the fairest provinces of both powers, and their creed upon the ruins of Christianity and the Magian superstition. He then raised his voice, and, carrying the attention and evident admiration of his audience with him, adroitly apostrophized them, saying, “ You then, O Mussulmans, achieved the conquests of Syria, of Persia, of Egypt, of Shâm, or Palestine, which succeeded each other with a celerity that outruns description. You then led the storm onwards without check or pause, eastward to the frontiers of India and China, westward to the utmost confines of Africa, and to the shores of the Atlantic, and on the north to the banks of Oxus and Jaxartes, and the uttermost borders of the Caspian. In the twenty-first year of the Hejra, the Mahomedan crescent shed its influence upon as large and considerable dominions

as had been flown over by the Roman eagle. In eighty years, your empire, O sons of Islam, extended its power over more kingdoms and countries than the Romans in eight hundred; and in less than a century from the period of its rise in the barren wilds of Arabia, your faith extended and bore sway over the greater part of Asia and Africa, and threatened to seat itself in the heart of Catholic Europe.*

This address to their vanity so entirely succeeded in securing for him a breathless attention to his words, that he would have found no further difficulty in making good his discourse, had not the wary and jealous Mufti, who had been an anxious observer of the temper of the assembly, begun to apprehend that he might lose his victim. "What has this to do," he exclaimed, "with the object of our meeting? Did not I say that he was a true believer? Has he come hither to laugh at our beards?"

Osmond extended his hand as if to impose silence, and then continued, "Grant me your patience as well as your attention, and I will

* Mahometanism Unveiled, vol. i. p. 11.

explain myself with those words which God has granted to his servant."

"Speak on, speak on," was heard to come from different parts of the crowd, whilst the old man of the mountain merely looked up and shook his head. Mustafa and Stasso scarcely could draw breath, so utterly were they astonished at the success which had hitherto attended their master, although they neither of them could well comprehend to what result he was directing his speech.

He then proceeded to draw a parallel between Christianity and Mahomedanism — to show the evidences which existed for the former being vouchsafed to mankind by God for the remission of their sins, that it was ushered in by prophecy, and established by miracles performed in the person of our Saviour, and remarked that no such evidences existed in favour of Mahomedanism. Christianity, he asserted, was a religion of peace, whereas Mahomedanism, on the other hand, was a religion of the sword; and in enumerating the various facts in Eastern history illustrative of the violence which marked

its propagation, he dwelt much upon that prediction which related to Ishmael—"his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him," strongly exemplifying the state of the Arabs at that very time. They were called "a people armed against mankind."

With much eloquence he spoke of the extraordinary qualities of Mahomet, of his ingenuity in drawing his nation out of their barbarism and superstition, in leading them to adopt a higher tone of morality, and giving them truer notions of the greatness of the Creator. "He led them to believe in one God, creator and lord of all, to whom they attribute infinite power, justice, and mercy—he taught them to hold to the immortality of the soul, to expect a future judgment, a heaven and hell—to honour the patriarch Abraham as the first author of their religion—to acknowledge Moses and Christ to have been great prophets, and to allow the Pentateuch and the Gospel to be sacred books.* But then it must be plain to every one," continued Osmond, "that all that

* Mahometanism Unveiled, vol. i. p. 102.

is good in the Koran is drawn from the Christian's Bible."

"The Koran itself is a miracle," exclaimed a voice from the crowd; "deny that if you can?"

This was a signal to the whole assembly to pour out their hitherto suppressed retorts, and it would have been difficult to make out any definite answer, or any succession of argument, to what Osmond had advanced, or any thing but a general tone of hostility against him. "Let him answer that," said one. "What words has the infidel been throwing into the air?" cried another. "We have phrases which will disperse all his," said a third. "Let him disappear from among us," roared out others. "We are Mus-sulmans!" cried out those who listened only to passion and cared not for argument. Again was vociferated, "The Koran is in itself a standing miracle, let him but accede to that and we want no more."

Silence having been obtained, Osmond, undismayed by the rising tumult, although disappointed at what he had at first hoped had

been a promise of success, answered: "The Koran might indeed have been called a miracle in the dark and barbarous times in which it was first published, but then it must have been so called as an extraordinary effort of human ingenuity, not as a supernatural interposition. The parts which are taken from the Christian Bible are divine; those which are the works of a mortal are not divine. They are spurious. They are *bosh*—nothing."

At these words a general and violent outcry of anger and execration was raised in the assembly against Osmond. In vain had he hoped that he had shaken the belief of some of his hearers and arrayed them on his side; the burst of violent expressions which exploded at his last assertion showed him how much he was mistaken, and how impossible it would be for him to make a lasting impression on so short a notice. Answers to his argument were no longer sought for; abuse of himself, his creed, and his nation, alone met his ear—*Kiupek*—dog, *kelb*—cur, *giaour*—infidel, *haremzadeh*—ill-born, and a thousand other abusive terms, rose from the

bottom of each angry throat, and were confirmed by the most violent gestures and indications of aversion. The faces of the mass opposed to Osmond assumed the character of a compact living mosaic of demons, their eyes flashing fury, and their mouths distorted into every figure which that feature can take.

The Mufti at length, commanding silence, solemnly addressed Osmond in these words; “As you are a man, and as you fear to die, say, do you acknowledge the Mahomedan faith to be the only true one, and the blessed Mahomet to be the prophet of God, or do you deny it? Speak, and Allah direct your speech!” At these words the whole assembly roared out, “Speak, speak!” and by the fierceness of their looks and gestures seemed to be preparing for violence.

Osmond was still undismayed. His object had been gradually to lead on his audience to this fact, that Mahomet and his empire had been predicted from the first ages, and that from the days of Ishmael to the present his career and that of his adherents might be traced in our prophetic books, and that, although his

religion was false, yet still it was, from the large portions which had been drawn from the Christian Bible, so far good that it was preparatory to the adoption of the faith in Jesus Christ. He made several attempts to resume the thread of his argument, but in vain; the more he endeavoured to obtain a hearing, the more violent were the cries for an answer to the Mufti's question. Mustafa, who sat behind him, peering into his face with a most beseeching look, said to him in English, "In the name of Allah! tell lies. If you do not say you are a Mussulman, we die—then what will be the use of your truth?" Stasso, too, who saw the impending storm, said, "Master, as you love your eyes, let the devil take them, but save us—these demons will cut our throats."

Osmond felt that he must decide what course to pursue in this awful crisis of his fate, and that decision was not for a moment doubtful. He extended his hand and arm in the midst of the uproar in order to obtain silence; and the instant he had done so, although every tongue was quiet, it might have been supposed that

every face had been also fixed, as if by magic, into the ferocious cast of its features, so intense was the attention. The Mufti's features bore the stamp of great excitement, the Pasha alone surveyed Osmond with admiration, whilst the old man of the mountain, who hitherto had been principally concerned in mumbling out portions of the Koran, stopped the action of his lips, and cast his old withered eye towards the object of the tumult.

When silence was restored, so that even a suppressed sigh might have been heard, Osmond, in a firm and audible voice, said :

“ You ask me whether I acknowledge the Mahomedan faith to be the true one: I answer that I do not, and that it is false.”

No sooner had these words escaped from his lips, than a scene ensued which words cannot describe: the agitation of the sea in a storm, the rocking to and fro of a forest, or any other usual simile, are but poor figures to illustrate what took place. The otherwise calm and placid Turks here at once became the representatives of infernal beings; their eyes flashed

forth every hateful passion, whilst their extended hands showed to what extent their violence would impel them. Even the spirit of a Turk arose in Mustafa; and he too almost partook of the universal rage against his master, so angry was he at finding himself thus implicated in what in his heart he called his folly and English pertinacity.

Osmond stood boldly forward, his right-hand thrust within the folds of his breast, whilst his left hung by his side. The Mufti had no sooner heard the prisoner's declaration, than he exclaimed to the assembly, at the utmost extent of his voice: "Mussulmans, do you hear this? Mussulmans, our faith is in danger! the infidel is among us — slay!" The old man of the mountain then for the first time opened his lips, and cried out in a cracked though distinct enunciation, "My children, in the name of Allah, kill the Giaour!" Upon which a general rush towards Osmond took place, and a confusion ensued which, although awful in its import, might well be called ludicrous in its incidents. Turk rolled over

Turk, turbans fell and discovered naked sconces, and instruments of all descriptions, from a slipper to an inkstand, were thrown in the direction of the prisoner. He coolly watched the danger as it approached, and his faithful Stasso would have skreened him with his person ; but when Osmond found himself seized by several of the foremost of the crowd, with a sudden bound he shook off his immediate assailants, and, making at once to the spot where the Mufti was seated, with his left hand he seized him by the breast, and with the other drew forth a pistol from his vest and presented it at once to the head of the appalled and astonished chief of the law. Osmond vociferated in a voice of thunder, "Advance but a step further, and I fire !" This decisive act produced an instantaneous effect, for the Mufti immediately roared out, "Stay, be quiet ! in the name of Allah, peace !" and although, like wild animals deprived of their prey, who lash their tails and show their teeth with impotent fury, the maddened Turks could scarcely refrain from violence ; still they only paused for the

moment, in the hope that treachery would effect that which open force at present could not. Osmond was, however, too much aware of his danger to quit his hold without having some assurance of security; and accordingly kept the struggling and half-fainting Mufti under the muzzle of his pistol, until the Pasha, rousing himself from a half state of repose, ordered his guard, which was in attendance, to take charge of the prisoner, and reconduct him, together with Mustafa and Stasso, to a place of confinement: thus favouring their retreat, and securing them from immediate danger.

The Pasha, whose admiration of Osmond had greatly increased since he had witnessed the power of his oratory, had already determined in his own mind that the wiles of the Mufti and the religious set with whom he was leagued should not succeed, and consequently he remained passive until the proper moment for action arrived; but then, having preserved him from present destruction, he still felt that he could not so much oppose the popular feeling as to openly es-

pouse his cause, and therefore ordered that he and his suite should be confined in the prison which has already been noticed as looking upon the court-yard of the Pasha's palace, and thither they were conducted amid the howling, the hooting, and execrations of the crowd.

When they had reached that place, and were left to themselves, the first impulse of Osmond was to put up a hearty prayer of thanks for his respite from death, whilst that of Mustafa was to pour forth the vial of his wrath against his master. "Am I an ass," said he, "that you will not listen to what I say? Did I not tell you that these fellows were not men, but devils? What do they care for your fine speeches, for your Ishmaels and Abrahams, for China and the Roman eagles, and I know not what! May the mothers and fathers of Roman eagles be defiled! Before you speak, they already think you fit for Jehanum; do you suppose they will think you a bit less so after you have spoken? No! were a Giaour to speak with the tongue of an angel, he still would

be a Giaour." Then taking up the lapel of his cloak, and shaking it, whilst his head vibrated in unison, he exclaimed, "Allah ! Allah ! heaven preserve us from such another misfortune ! we have escaped this time, but see, if you are mad again, shall we escape a second ?"

Thus did he go on, whilst Osmond took a survey of his prison. It was considerably more like a stable than a room ; low, unfloored and unpaved, and festooned with cobwebs. On one side a small iron-grating afforded a view of the Pasha's court-yard, so that every one entering or strolling about might be seen ; on the other was the door, fastened by a lock of no great strength, and opening into a small narrow lane, which terminated in one of the streets of the city. Here they were exposed to the gaze of every one who chose to look through the grating, and many were the expressions of contempt and execration which they occasionally heard addressed to them. It would have been no difficult matter to break open the door and force their way ; but whither could they

fly, totally destitute of help, and surrounded by guards? It was plain that their best plan was to remain quiet, to allow the storm which had been raised to abate, and then, either by stratagem or negotiation, to seize upon some fitting opportunity to effect their escape.

CHAPTER XIII.

I drive back the horses on their haunches from the lofty seat of my thin-flanked Abjer.— The sword is my father, and the spear in my hand is my father's brother.—

HAMILTON'S *Antar*.

AS soon as the prisoners had left the medresseh, the assembly broke up, and every one returned home. The result was the same as that of a still swelling and unsatisfied passion in the human breast: every man who had been present resolved in his mind that the Giaour should not leave Kars alive, and the whole population might be said to be impelled by that resolution. The Pasha returned to his palace, the Mufti to his house, the tattered saint to his mountain, and Suleiman Aga to his harem.

Zabetta had made herself very busy among the women of the city, mounting first on a terrace, then on the roof of a mosque, then on the nearest projection which overlooked the place of meeting, in order that she might ascertain the truth of the proceedings against Osmond, upon which depended her own future schemes ; and when she had seen him return to prison, she bent her steps homeward. The dejected Ayesha had not ventured to leave the walls of her home, great as was her anxiety concerning the fate of her lover. She dreaded the results of the morning's controversy ; for she well knew the inflexible nature of his mind, and was convinced that one so guided by principle would never swerve from it under the most severe visitation of danger. She also knew the uncompromising nature of the fanaticism of her own countrymen, and how totally useless even the most convincing arguments would be in turning them from the path of their religious faith. She had therefore made up her mind to the worst ; and as she sat at her window, listening with

breathless attention to the least noise which arose in the city, she expected every moment to be called upon to hear of her lover's destruction. In her distress she could not long remain fixed on one spot, but wandered to and fro from her apartment to the house-top, and from the house-top to her apartment, in restless agitation. At one moment her cheek became pale with fear; at another her whole frame was dissolved in tears of the deepest grief — then she would pause and endeavour to gain relief from prayer, burying her face in her hands, and sobbing out her supplications to the foot of the heavenly throne for the safety of her lover.

In this state, she heard the door of the house open and close again, and recognised the footsteps of her mother, followed by her slave. She could scarcely refrain from rushing out to meet her, forgetful of veil and every precaution which a Mahomedan woman always takes before she issues forth; and at last when she saw her enter, she trembled so violently that her limbs refused to do their office, and she almost fell headlong on the floor. She had suffi-

cient strength to exclaim, "Does he live?" and would perhaps have lost all sensation, had she not been instantly revived by hearing her mother answer, "He lives — the dogs have not killed him yet!" This quick revulsion was succeeded by its concomitant evils — violent hysterics — an almost total extinction of life, and then a flow of overwhelming tears, which brought on the usual exhaustion and relief. Any one but so heartless a creature as Zabetta would have devoted herself to the care of this most interesting maiden, who throughout her distress had exhibited feminine loveliness in its most bewitching character ; but, leaving her to the care of the kind-hearted Nourzadeh, she merely thought of planning her own schemes and pursuing her own inventions. By the time Suleiman Aga had returned, his daughter had in a great measure recovered her self-composure, and although her recent violent emotions had left her a prey to languor and dejection, still she was well enough to receive and converse with him.

Suleiman Aga, as before stated, was a

bigoted Mahomedan ; he had heard all that Osmond advanced with dogged obstinacy, little understanding the drift of his speech, and predetermined not to assent to a single argument ; but still he was pleased at first to find that he had obtained a hearing from the assembly, and that it had evinced a disposition to be tolerant, for he hoped that this augured well for the conversion of his future son-in-law. Whilst his mind was firm in his own faith, his thoughts would wander to Ayesha, to whom he hoped to bring a good account of the result of the meeting ; but when the tumult broke out, and he found that all his hopes were dispelled, his naturally tacit nature was roused into more than usual violence, and, catching the maddening infection, he was soon the foremost in the crowd, forgetful of Ayesha and of every softer emotion, exciting its violence towards the destruction of Osmond.

By the time he had reached his home, his fury had in a great measure abated ; and he was hastening to complete his composure through the medium of his favourite pipe, when he was

startled by the wan and dejected appearance of his daughter. She soon read in his looks that there was no hope left, and would have quitted him; but with all his intolerance he was kind-hearted, and calling her to him said, "Ayesha, my soul, what has happened?"

"You know what has happened," answered the broken-spirited girl: "Let the decrees of Allah prevail—What can we poor creatures do?"

"*Allah kerîm* — God is merciful!" returned her father with a deep-drawn sigh; "What can we do? the Giaour is mad! what can we do?"

"You must save his life!" exclaimed Ayesha with the greatest earnestness. "Set him free; let him depart. As you love Allah! as you bend to his holy decrees! as you are a servant of his Prophet! you must not allow the blood of the innocent man to be upon your house! After all, you are the person to speak! Go to the tribunal of justice: say you insist upon his being set free—let him depart in peace!"

Suleiman, who had been so active in exciting his townsmen to destroy the unbeliever, sat sullen and silent at this appeal; and as one between two roads, uncertain which to take, stands stock still, he remained fixed to his seat, unmoved and undetermined. At last, full of the same uncertainty of purpose, but anxious to be relieved from the immediate influence of his daughter, he suddenly rose, and uttering the never-failing "*Bakalum!*— we shall see!" retreated with haste to his own apartment.

In the mean while, the Pasha, who occasionally would have visitations of wisdom, particularly when it was to oppose the designs of the Mufti and the priests, issued his orders throughout the city, that on the following day he would exhibit to the people feats of wrestling, to be succeeded by a camel-fight, and to finish by a grand game of *jeríd*. Nothing could be better calculated to extinguish one excitement by producing another than this order, for nothing was more relished by all ranks than such sports. The whole scene

was to take place in the great court of his palace, under his immediate direction; and as he himself was devotedly fond of the excitement which it produced, preparations were made with all the splendour which Turkish grandees generally put forth on such occasions. We have already shown that he was a great patron of wrestlers; he possessed the first of his species in that line: his camels were also some of the finest in Asia; and his horses, as well as their riders, were said to be equal to any in the Kurdistan. Thus provided, he always took the field with superior advantage; and as soon as it was known that Pehlivan Pasha was about to give a *jeríd* party, all the neighbouring agas, or chiefs, immediately flocked to the city, mounted upon their favourite horses, and accompanied by their adherents, to partake of the sport.

On the following morning the whole city was on foot in anticipation of the pleasure in waiting for them. Parties of horsemen were seen entering the gates by five or six at a time, and, proceeding to the different coffee-

houses, they alighted to drink coffee and smoke, in order to await the hour of meeting, whilst their steeds were picketed about in various places, rending the air by their shrill neighing. The women, too, in readiness, had already taken post on the walls and the tops of the houses which surrounded the scene of action, all clad in their white veils, looking more like spectres than those whom we are wont to call Nature's fairest half. Though unseen, they were not unheard; and although their charms were concealed, their tongues, loud and unceasing, showed, even among Turks, that they had a great deal to say for themselves. A conspicuous and elevated place had been swept, carpeted, and cushioned, for the reception of the principal agas and visitors; whilst the kiosk, which looked immediately on the court, was prepared for the Pasha, the Mufti, and the principal men of the city. As soon after the noonday prayer as was convenient, the world began to assemble, and it was not long before the greatest portion of the inhabitants

had managed to collect themselves into compact masses, covering every wall, crowning every heap, and overwhelming every spot; in short, doing that which other mobs do, excepting, perhaps, that the mob now in question might vie with all others in quiet, sobriety, and dignity of deportment. At length the Pasha, and the other dignitaries, having taken post, and having smoked and said "*Khosh geldin*," and retorted "*Khosh buldounk*," a signal was given, and the Pasha's chaoush led forth two wrestlers into the arena. Indifferent performers at first began, and were followed in quick succession by others, until the Pasha's celebrated negro came rushing on to the scene, like a lion longing for his prey. He threw every one that was opposed to him with uninteresting facility; and the Pasha would willingly have sent for Osmond to oppose him, and indeed was about to lend himself to the cry of "*Giaour! haniah Giaour!*"—Where is the Giaour?" which some of the negro's enemies tauntingly set up, when he was checked by the fear that his appear-

ance might give rise to a religious tumult, which probably would put an end to the day's sport.

The wrestling was succeeded by a set-to of camels. These otherwise passive creatures, at certain irritating seasons are apt to be very furious. When male is brought face to face to male, all their evil passions are awakened, and the moment they are at liberty they fly at each other with corresponding violence. At a given order from the Pasha, a magnificent camel, his mouth white with foam, his tongue performing curious convolutions, emitting loud and hoarse cries, was led forth by two men, who were scarcely strong enough to restrain his impetuosity. He was gaily caparisoned with a saddle of crimson, green, and yellow cloth, his head being decked with a bridle glittering with inlaid shells and worsted tassels; he was, moreover, ornamented about the upper arm of the leg with armlets, also inlaid with shells. This fine animal now no longer wore the usual calm and patient aspect of his race; for his nature appeared quite

changed ; his neck and head were erect, his eye flashed fire, and, the moment he perceived his opponent approaching from an opposite quarter, it was almost impossible to restrain him.

At the word "*Gitsin*" from the Pasha, both the animals were slipt from their rein, and they rushed upon each other with astonishing agility. Their mode of attack is very much that of wrestlers ; their bite is terrible, but, being both muzzled, they were harmless. They made the most dexterous use of their necks as well as of their legs in trying to throw each other down, twisting and writhing, giving way, then advancing with contortions the most singular, which, although graceless, were nevertheless not deficient in picturesque effect. The Turks appeared much interested in the result of the fight : from anxiety they could scarcely smoke — bets were laid — their own calm nature, so like that of the animal itself, was roused, and more words were heard among the crowd at that moment than perhaps are ever spoken throughout the year at Kars. At length the result was declared to be in favour of the Pasha's camel, who, by

certain able combinations between his neck and legs, had managed to pin his adversary to the ground, where he lay motionless and unresisting, until he was at length dragged away, amidst the exclamations of *Mashallah!* and *Evallah!* of the surrounding audience.

The camel-fights continued, in varied succession, to take up the time until the day began to decline, when the court was cleared to admit the horsemen for the exhibition of the jerîd. Whoever has witnessed this exercise in perfection among the Turks will, I am sure, own that it is the most manly that can be devised, requiring more courage, agility, and skill, than any other, and developing in the finest manner the energies both of the rider and his beast. Two parties of horsemen arrange themselves on opposite sides, and gradually engage in a general skirmish, armed with a staff or javelin about five feet long, and as thick as one's middle finger, which they lance at each other, in the fullest speed of their horses, with the straightness and strength almost of an arrow from a bow. It is usually a contest

between man and man; for, either by animating shouts or by gestures, the parties individually select each other, and proceed to dart the fiercest blows which their strength and dexterity can command, alternately the one in flight, the other in pursuit, thus sometimes inflicting very serious if not mortal wounds.

Osmond, Mustafa, and Stasso, had, by way of beguiling the tedium of their confinement, by turns taken post at the iron-grated window which looked upon the court, to see the sport, when a little old woman, whom Stasso recognized to be the old Caterina, stepped close up to it, and, watching her opportunity, threw in a small folded slip of paper and straightway disappeared. Osmond immediately took it up, opened, and found within it these words written — ‘Fly for your life — your death otherwise is certain — Allah preserve you!’ His whole frame shook with secret transport as he viewed this note, for he well knew whence it came — it could have been dictated by none other than that faithful heart which beat in response to his

own ; but, in looking hopelessly around his prison, he asked how he could fly — where were the means ? He paced his miserable room, deeply reflecting what he could do to save himself, for he knew but too well how true were the words which he had just read.

The jerîd party had now begun its movements. A dense body of the pasha's officers and guards, mounted on the finest horses, richly caparisoned, their mouths foaming and fretting under the heavy bit, curveting and uprearing, were arranged in due order on the one side, whilst a corresponding body of Kûrds, men of the plain, and agas from the villages and hill country, were placed on the other, the whole dressed in cloths, velvets, and silks of every hue, their various ornamental arms and accoutrements glittering in the sun : forming the most brilliant combination of men, horses, rich drapery, and fine colouring, that can be conceived, and, perhaps, exceeding in picturesque beauty any similar combination in any other part of the world. After a pause, previously to the first onset, a sensation was observed among the

assembled horsemen, which was caused by the appearance of the Pasha in person among them.

He had stripped himself of his heavy furred pelisse and had put on a light silken wadded jacket, which, fitting tight to his shape, set off his herculean shoulders. Mounted on a powerful Turcoman horse, whose sleek and shining coat showed at once the excellence of his breed and the superior care with which he was tended, and whose magnificent trappings, glittering with gold and embroidery, shone conspicuous above all others, he was altogether a striking personage. He wore a shawl on his head ; his legs were clothed with an immense pair of cloth shalwars, that hung in folds to his ankles ; and the vigour with which he bestrode his saddle, and wielded his jerîd, showed that of all the combatants present he was the most formidable. He threw the first javelin, and this became the signal for engaging in the sport. The whole mass was soon in motion. At first, those who engaged proceeded with wariness and caution. One cavalier was detached from the Pasha's party towards that of the Kûrds :

advancing at a slight trot, he gradually approached, discharged his jerîd at the foremost man, and immediately turning sharply round, fled at full speed, followed by the antagonist whom he had selected, who in return threw his javelin with all the force and dexterity which he could muster. The retreating horseman, with head looking behind, and with an eye accustomed to watch the direction of the coming weapon, was ready either to catch it as it glanced by him, or to throw himself entirely under his horse's belly if he saw it about to take effect, and then, with unparalleled dexterity, when discharged, to stop his horse at once with a sudden jerk, turn and pursue again, until, his javelins being expended, he was obliged to seek for more, either picking them off the ground with a crooked cane, which he had for the purpose, or receiving them from the hand of some valet whose business it was to collect and distribute them. This took place in succession with every cavalier present, until the whole were engaged; and as the fray increased, in the same proportion increased the

animation and vigour of both the horses and their riders. The noble animals, enjoying the sport as much as the men, were soon bathed in a white foam; and, their eyes flashing fire, their nostrils expanded, every muscle stretched to the utmost, and their whole being changed, exhibited themselves in attitudes and forms which perhaps are never seen excepting in this sport, or in actual warfare. Their riders, too, whose usual dull and phlegmatic humours make them look more like automata than living beings, were now not to be recognized — every look was animation, every gesture agility; and as the engagement continued, their cheerings increased into shouts, which, mingled with the trampling of their horses and the clatter of their trappings and accoutrements, afforded as true a picture of a real battle as can well be imagined. The Pasha kept aloof, and did not engage in the heat of the fray, but every now and then, when he found his opportunity, he selected some more aspiring or more successful horseman above the rest, and did him the honour of throwing

his jerîd at him, seldom failing at the same time to confer the distinction of a broken head.

There was one among the rest who was more distinguished by the Pasha than the others. This was a Kûrdish cavalier, magnificently dressed : his varied-coloured silken head-dress hung low over his face, and in combination with his immense mustaches, which curled up to the corners of his eyes, it was with difficulty that his features could be distinguished. Then the large crimson bag or pouch peculiar to the Kûrdish head-dress, terminated by an immense blue tassel, was larger than those appendages usually are, and seemed to be turned over his head on purpose to throw as much shade upon his countenance as possible, which, to say the truth, was sufficiently remarkable. He rode a horse which might have vied with the Pasha's in beauty, but which certainly excelled his in activity ; it was coal-black, a rare colour in those countries, and not generally in high estimation, but in this instance gave the lie to the received opinion among Asiatics, that it denotes a vicious and bad temper, for nothing

was ever more docile or sagacious than it appeared to be during this day's sport. It was seen carrying its master into the thickest of the fray, now advancing, then retreating, with the rapidity of lightning. He was rather of a slight figure, but full of muscle and nerve; and the astonishing feats of horsemanship which he exhibited were the remark and admiration of the whole field. The Pasha had twice selected him as one of his victims, had given him chase, and had launched his jerîd at him without effect. It was in retreating before the Pasha the second time, that he had dashed his horse immediately under the small grated window of Osmond's prison, and had stopped there in order to pick up one of his own favourite jerîds.

Stasso had been posted there some time before, admiring the feats of this man, longing himself to be one of the party, and criticising in his mind the action of every horseman. His eye had, however, been riveted by the distinguished Kûrd more than by any other — he thought he had seen him before; there was a certain turn of his back and shoulders

which was familiar to him. Still he argued within himself that he never could have known so magnificent a personage ; his acquaintance ran more among grooms, guides, and muleteers —no, he never could have known a Kurdish pasha, for such he esteemed him to be, of such high pretensions. However, looking with all his eyes at the man, who was then standing close to him and stooping down to pick up his javelin, to his astonishment, under the flow of silken tassels that screened his eyes and brow, he discovered his old friend Hassan the Surugi, whose life on a former occasion his master had saved. His heart rose into his mouth at this important discovery—without one moment's delay and consideration, he exclaimed loudly, "Hassan Aga, Hassan Aga, *bak*—look." The Kurd, apparently annoyed at being recognised, was about leaving his jerîd and turning away his horse, when, on raising his head, his eye caught Stasso's. His surprise was great at seeing one whom he had long thought gone ; he immediately recognised the man whom he had known as the Boshnak,

and quickly said, "*Ne oldou* — What has happened?" Upon which Stasso in a low and mysterious manner said to him, "When last we parted, you told me, should we ever be in want of your services, to apply to you. If you are a man, Hassan Aga, be faithful to your word; release my master from this prison, and depend upon his gratitude." The Kurd heard these words with attention, put up his finger before his mouth to enjoin secrecy, and straightway dashed his horse again into the thickest of the fray. Stasso of course continued to watch his movements, but, to his utter disappointment, the Kurd proceeded in his career of sport, apparently totally unmindful of him or his master.

The fray had now risen to its highest pitch. The Pasha, whose anger had been excited at being foiled in his two attempts to plant a blow upon the gallant Kurd, had determined to make a third, and launched out his horse at him with all the vigour which a pair of sharp stirrups to his side could give him. He approached him jerîd in hand, roaring

out at the top of his voice, “ *Y'allah, Y'allah, Agam!*—In the name of Allah my lord!” when Hassan turned his horse sharply round and retreated on the fullest speed, throwing himself entirely under his body, merely hanging by the mane and by his leg, which he hooked on to his saddle, thus giving the Pasha no one good spot upon which to deliver his javelin ; which he did, however, on the under part of his large brass stirrup, so that the only result was the ringing noise which announced his ill-success. Immediately upon this, Hassan was on his saddle again, and, turning with the greatest agility upon his ponderous adversary, who, according to the laws of the game, was obliged to retreat in his turn, he lashed up his horse to the highest pitch of his mettle, and this time, heedless of the respect due to the Pasha's rank, which as a point of courtesy always prevented a return of the attack, he delivered his well-poised, his unerring jerîd, immediately between his highness's shoulders, which indeed presented a noble target, and so nicely between, that the

weapon, meeting the back-bone, bounded up high into the air like a rocket. Seeing this, Hassan, to complete his triumph in the eyes of all the field, (for a pause had taken place to witness this feat,) dashed his horse forward in the direction of his javelin, and with head erect and arm extended, succeeded in catching it firmly in his hand, ere it fell to the ground. Such an exhibition of dexterity was hitherto unknown to the Turks; and although at the expense of the Pasha, all those who had seen it, could not refrain from exclaiming aloud, “*Aferin ! Aferin !—Mashallah ! Mashallah !*”

This applause, added to the mortification of having received so palpable a blow, aroused all the Pasha's passions. He felt himself insulted, and, what was still more galling to him, he felt that he had found his superior in skill, and, moreover, that that superior was a Kurd, one of a people whom it is the fashion in Turkey to despise. Immediately, in his fury, he turned again upon Hassan; and his own officers and adherents, who were never sorry to insult the Kurds, seeing how it had fared with

their master, were not slow in catching his rage, and, one and all, made a most formidable charge against the adverse party. The game, from being a sport, became a fight — their cries of mutual cheering and excitement were turned into cries of insult and invective — “Kurdish hogs ! Sons of the devil !” were roared out by the Turks ; “ Long-bearded asses ! Filth of Omar !” were returned by the Kurds. Jerîds flew as thick as hail — horse was impelled against horse, and the air rang with the shock of breastplates and stirrups. The Pasha was seen urging on his men — Hassan bounded on his furious steed from one side of the fray to the other. At length a Kurd was brought to the ground by a Turk, the dismounted man, in falling, fired his pistol, and killed the Turk ; then a general cry of “ hand to the sword ” issued from both sides, and a scene of life and death took place, which not unfrequently terminates this sort of tournaments.

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